

The
INTERLOPERS

GRIFFING BANCROFT

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THE INTERLOPERS





"I want to have you with me always."

THE INTERLOPERS

A NOVEL

By
GRIFFING BANCROFT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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NEW YORK
THE BANCROFT COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
1917

3917

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Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	A New Doctor Comes to Rosario . . .	1
II	The Christmas Storm	15
III	J. P. Butler & Co.	26
IV	Sam Coulters Plays Politics	43
V	Love at Sunrise	56
VI	The Rosario School	68
VII	Robert Hollington's Ideals	82
VIII	Gossip and Courtship	94
IX	An Angry Father	106
X	The Breach	119
XI	Coulters Stumps the State	135
XII	Hollington Visits the Indians	148
XIII	Frances Goes to San Clemente	162
XIV	Coulters Gets His Land Law	176
XV	The Japanese Pupils Return	189
XVI	The Dance in San Clemente	202
XVII	Hollington Goes Fishing	214
XVIII	Dorothy Teaches School	229
XIX	Frances Comes Home	242
XX	The Black Scale	255
XXI	Frances and Kotingo	267
XXII	Dorothy Tibbetts' Wedding	280
XXIII	The Other Woman	293
XXIV	The Collapse of Donald Scott	305
XXV	The Decline of Hollington	319
XXVI	Arrest of Clem Harding	327
XXVII	The Last Trench	341
XXVIII	Irving Stanhope's Sermon	354
XXIX	Love's Clearing House	364
XXX	Hanba Coerces Sam Coulters	376
XXXI	The Bubonic Plague	386

ILLUSTRATIONS

"I want to have you with me always" . . . *Frontispiece*

"The time spent with him became the hours to which
she looked forward" 235

"Drop that gun!" 335

"When barely two yards separated them, Robert's
hand shot out of his coat pocket" 387

The Interlopers

CHAPTER I

A NEW DOCTOR COMES TO ROSARIO



THE San Diego and Eden Valley train stopped noisily to drop a single passenger at Rosario. The station was on a barren hillside, a mile or more from the nearest house. The only persons about were the agent, talking lazily to the engineer, and a rather elderly man in overalls and jumper holding the lines over a pair of farm horses. These were harnessed to a spring wagon, a dilapidated, weather-worn vehicle that had not seen a coat of paint since leaving the factory.

The passenger, a carefully groomed young man, obviously from the eastern coast, walked up to the driver and asked:—

“Are you Mr. Coulter’s man?”

“Yes. Sam sent me. Wait until they get your stuff off the train, and I’ll drive you home. Are you our new doctor?”

Soon the two were off toward the valley. They occupied the single seat in front; the rear, designed like a small delivery wagon, was filled with baggage.

The driver was meditatively enjoying his plug tobacco; the passenger was absorbed in the first im-

THE INTERLOPERS

pressions of his new environment. The air was hot, the road thickly powdered, and the incandescent dust enveloped them.

So this was the famous southern California, that called and called again to all who had ever made it their home. Where was the charm? Surely not in these barren plains and denuded hills that stretched off toward the north-west.

"It's the wrong time of day," broke in a voice on his right, "and the wrong time of the year. You'll learn to love these hills some time; everybody does. You see how ugly they can be; I've lived among them so long that I know how beautiful they can be. Do you judge a woman as she displays herself in evening dress or as she appears in the morning at breakfast? These hills can't be going to a party all the time."

The easterner fairly gasped. Then he looked about again, sighed and shook his head. He wasn't expecting philosophic discourse, and he didn't know just how to take it.

"You can see most of Rosario from here," continued the native, who did not relish even a silent criticism of his mountains. "There's only a little of it past that bend. They grow oranges mostly; some lemons and some olives, but nearly all those fruit trees are oranges. Can you make out that water tower away off there to the right? It's just in line now with the bunch of eucalyptus across the valley. That's Sam Coulters' place. Mine is the first one over on your left, almost under our feet."

A NEW DOCTOR COMES TO ROSARIO

"Yours looks like a snug little place. Doesn't it require all of your time?"

"I can't get more than taxes and interest out of it. I had to put a mortgage on it during the dry years. So now when I want to eat I have to work outside, usually for Sam. At the time of the big slump I thought I'd lose it, but I'm hanging on to that little old place, for it's the only home I've ever had. And this year I'm going to make some money on it."

"You've not always lived in Rosario, have you?"

Clem Harding, the driver, was always glad of an opportunity to talk about himself. He chatted on for some time about his early days when he "followed the cows" all over the great west, and about his experiences in prospecting, from Canada to below the Mexican line. And he knew quite a bit of frontier times and frontier towns when the lid was off, and life was cheap and tense.

So a pleasant half hour slipped by, while the lumbering draft-horses descended to the floor of the valley. The young doctor was enjoying himself, though without any change of sentiment toward the country. He was waiting now until they should be among the orchards; there it must be that lay the charm of this great southwest.

The first cultivated land they came to was a barley field, several hundred acres on either side of the road. And then a dog emerged from the shadows of the wagon, a large, rangy, black greyhound.

"That's Nig," said Harding. "He's a good old

THE INTERLOPERS

scout. He'll not let a jack rabbit stay in the valley, and he's getting to be the best squirrel dog I've ever seen."

"Those little brown things really are squirrels? It's hard to realize it. Those at home live in trees and are so much prettier."

"Like the ones we have in the mountains among the pines. I just love those, and I wouldn't let Nig worry them. He can't catch them, however, and I think they all enjoy the game. But these ground squirrels are pests. Their holes have broken many a good horse's leg. And look at that grain."

It was well worth more than a cursory glance. Shoulder high and dead ripe, it stirred luxuriantly in the afternoon breeze. Little gusts of wind could be traced on its surface, when the stalk heads ducked and sported and changed color faster than the eye could follow.

"Those vermin lead a happy life until they get the poison," Clem went on. "Mr. Squirrel digs a hole and sits on the dump to enjoy the weather. When meal time comes, or when he wants to put away a winter supply of food he starts at his front door and takes what is nearest. See those round spots; some of them thirty feet across, where every blade of grass is gone? That's why he's so unpopular with the farmer. When he's in his hole he's safe, and when he's sitting beside it all he has to do for self-protection is to let himself drop. Even when he's rustling he takes no chances, for he can hear anything in the grain and see anything in

A NEW DOCTOR COMES TO ROSARIO

the sky, and he never goes far from home. He can't get absent minded or careless, for his neighbors just enjoy barking at an enemy as soon as one comes over the sky line."

"You said that Nig was a good squirrel dog. How in the world does he catch them?"

"Curiosity."

"Curiosity?"

"Children and Chinamen haven't it all, by any means. It has spoiled more poker plays and killed more squirrels—but I'll see if I can show you. Nig seems to know what we're talking about."

Keen and alert, the dog looked at his master, then, at the word, plunged into the grain-field. He was at once lost to view, and for some time could be followed only by the noise and the movement of the stalks. A loud, metallic squeaking heralded the attack.

"Now watch that dog!"

Nig had made a leap high enough to carry him above the grain. He struck the ground running, ventre à terre. A squirrel sitting above his burrow scolded viciously at a rustle in the grain which he couldn't understand. Suddenly a black thunder bolt tore through the edge of the clearing. With a frightened cry the rodent instinctively dropped to safety. But he had waited too long. A black muzzle followed him into the hole. He was jerked out and tossed ten feet into the air. By the time he was scrambling once more for his hole the pursuer had turned and caught him.

THE INTERLOPERS

Nig made several unsuccessful attempts to repeat this achievement; then he did kill once more in the same way. Clem called him back after that. The wagon had passed the barley field and was now coming to a truck garden.

Given the proper contrasts and perspective, one of the prettiest colors in nature is found in fresh plowed adobe. This is especially true when, as in this case, the earth is red, shading from almost gray in sandy spots to the rich, lustrous black of the king of soils. Add row after row of delicate green, with just a suggestion of motion among the leaves and flowers, and in the sluggish threads of irrigation and there is the material for a picture.

Art appeals to some; tastes and training vary. Beauty finds a response more in temperament than in education. Robert Hollington at once fell under the spell of this simple pastoral scene; it was one of those rare gems of nature which so impress the mind that recollection in some form remains forever.

For a few hundred feet the road here runs straight, then turns sharply to the right. A cluster of three or four giant eucalypts on the left; on the right a drooping pepper, and the California sky, incomparable when clouded. The background all glistening soil in brilliant colors. The Japanese gardener is pushing a hand cultivator along the narrow furrows. At a little distance are his wife and three small children. The figures are too diminutive

A NEW DOCTOR COMES TO ROSARIO

to make their costumes distinguishable, but their posture while weeding is a bit of old Japan.

The two men in the wagon are watching the scene intently; each knows the other is doing so, and each thinks the better of him because of it.

"There's one thing about this I don't like," said Clem, half to himself. "That woman ought to be making a home for her family, and those babies ought to be playing, or studying."

The road led through the first of the orchards, and for the rest of the drive there were citrus groves on one side or the other, usually both. With Clem's help Hollington was soon able to distinguish between the lighter green of the lemon and the rich velvety shade of the orange, and to recognize the citron, the olive, and the walnut. The subtle markings and shades of color that distinguished the various varieties of the same fruit were beyond his grasp, though an open book to his companion.

The lemon and orange trees were usually from ten to twenty feet high, and planted twenty-five feet apart. They were pruned to resemble an inverted cup, the foliage often being brought down quite close to the ground. The object was to get the greatest possible area of leaves exposed to the sun and the air, and to shade the ground around the trunk.

The sun was sinking, taking the light breeze with it; the dust no longer rose as high as the wagon seat. The air was filled with the rich perfume of the orange blossom, blended at times when it drifted across half harvested oat or alfalfa. The ornamen-

THE INTERLOPERS

tal trees by the roadside threw long shadows; the most beautiful time of the day had come. Conversation ceased in that old spring wagon. Clem was off in the mountains again, with pick and pack train. Hollington was lazily absorbing the contentment that had made a race of speculators and dreamers.

Both men came to themselves when the horses left the county road. Before them lay a few hundred feet of a gardened driveway. Palms on either side half hid the orange trees beyond, and flowers of all colors and degree were growing in a profusion little short of wanton to the New Yorker. At the farther end was a clump of magnificent peppers. Through their long spreading branches there could just be distinguished a feature here and there of the house they sheltered. It soon revealed itself, an attractive bungalow, a rambling wooden structure, with an attic and a porch. The veranda, always shaded and cool, fragrant with honeysuckle and climbing rose, was clearly the family hearth. Some simple wicker furniture was scattered about; a damp olla with an inviting tin dipper was hanging in a corner, half a dozen magazines and odds and ends of sewing gave it all a homelike touch.

On three sides the orchard came almost to the house. There was no attempt at a lawn. Some narrow garden beds were occupied largely by the roots of the vines that climbed in profusion over the cottage. On the fourth side, at a little distance, was the barn, used for horses, hay, and harness, as well as for everything else that did not properly belong

A NEW DOCTOR COMES TO ROSARIO

in the house. There were two low, shake-covered wings, in one of which a cow was kept, in the other farm implements. Some pig-pens were near, and beyond a windmill, its raised tank silhouetted against the sky. The farmyard, all the space taken from the orchards and not actually covered with buildings, was scrupulously clean, and for the greater part in the shadow of the peppers. A few chickens and turkeys, and even a pig or two, had the freedom of the place. A harrow, a cultivator, a sled and an old farm wagon were in the shadows, while hanging from the trees were two trace-chains, a whiffle-tree and a meat box. A suggestion of all this Hollington took in at a glance as he left the wagon and walked toward the house. The horses had made his coming known, so by the time he reached the porch Mrs. Coulters was there to welcome him.

"I have your room all ready for you, Doctor," she said, cordially. "I'm Mary Coulters and this is my daughter Ruth. The others will be here by the time dinner is ready. You've nearly half an hour."

So she took him through a sitting room that left a suggestion of wicker furniture and well-stocked book-cases, up a flight of stairs and into a narrow hall. Opening from this was a rather small bedroom, into which Clem Harding soon came, laden with suit cases.

After Hollington had changed his clothes, he went downstairs. Ruth called him into the dining room where she was setting the table. A pretty

THE INTERLOPERS

little thing she was, not past fifteen, yet thoroughly self-possessed.

"I hope you're going to like Rosario," she said. "Dr. Alling is coming over early in the morning to take you around."

"I'm sure I will if all Rosarians are like you," returned the doctor gallantly. "May I help you?"

"Thank you, I've almost finished. It's easier to do the rest myself than to show you how. You don't mind my saying that, do you?"

"Certainly not; it's true."

"New York is a long way from here. Did you have any exciting experiences on your trip?"

"I saw a great deal of interesting country and some uninteresting desert. I'm looking for my excitement here."

"In Rosario? Nothing ever happens in Rosario."

Mrs. Coulters came in, both hands holding a platter with the roast. Behind her came a young woman whom she introduced as her daughter Frances. The contrast between the two girls was striking, the elder tall, willowy, blonde, every move suggesting efficiency and good, hard common sense. Ruth had her mother's expression, the face of a dreamer, sweet and lovable.

Then Sam Coulters arrived, a man of parts, with the frame of an athlete and a hand clasp to make one wince. He wore a rather large moustache; his skin was hardened by the sun, his clothes were the clothes of a working man. But in any costume or in any company his face would mark him a man of

A NEW DOCTOR COMES TO ROSARIO

note. It had strength. Here was one who could think pretty straight to the core of any proposition, and who had the courage to follow his convictions.

Seated at the table, one of Dr. Hollington's first questions was of geography. "I'm trying to get something worked out in my mind," he said. "Dr. Alling always referred to Eden Valley as being in the mountains, and in San Diego you Rosarians are called mountaineers. Yet we were told at home that oranges are grown only in the lowlands, and our train today did not seem to climb very much."

"We are mountaineers," said Mary Coulters, "if shore birds are waterfowl. Our coast valleys run into the mountains like the fjords of Norway, and probably for the same reason. It must be that at some prehistoric time these valleys were deeper than you see them now, and were arms of the ocean. The wash of the rivers deposited silt under the water at a fairly constant level, so when the land rose out of the sea it left us with smooth, fertile fields running from one steep hillside to the other."

"I have always believed," said Frances, "that this country was once all rough and barren, and that the wash from the mountains has gradually filled the cañons. As soon as the water reached the bottom its speed would be so checked that it would deposit whatever soil it carried. Then, of course, the river would be raised until it was higher than the land on either side. After that it would work from one cañon side to the other like the thread on a bobbin."

THE INTERLOPERS

"Whatever the cause, these valleys sometimes work their way up among the hills," continued Mrs. Coulters, "and Eden Valley is really an isolated little finger tip, a tiny part of the great system below, yet practically separate, snuggling right into the heart of the mountains."

"The answer to the doctor's question," said Sam Coulters, "lies in the fact that in the days before we had trains the wagon road from San Diego ran across the hills into Rosario. Once this road started to climb, everything beyond became a part of the mountains, and that idea clung to us even after the railroad found its way here along the valley floor. You were almost home before your train took to the hills at all."

"You will find Rosario very different from New York." Mary Coulters had refilled the plates. "You'll have to learn to substitute horses for the subway and shooting for the theatre. At first you're going to be dissatisfied. But it will come to you, just as it has to all of us, that this is the real life, the natural one, the one to which we were born. When it does come, you'll never be contented away from here; nothing else will make up for our skies, our air, or our lovely evenings, and no home can ever mean as much to you as your home in these California hills."

"Mother is right," said Frances. "We've seen it happen here time after time. Wait until you have met the people of this valley and learned to know them. You'll find them hard-working, poor, victims

A NEW DOCTOR COMES TO ROSARIO

of countless vicissitudes, yet happy, thoroughly glad to be alive; and as to their homes, their little farms and bungalows, seldom is seen such determination to stay, such love, such devotion."

"They've proven it, too," said the father. "It's not been a matter of falling into some sinecure and becoming enervated in this balmy southland. They've worked and fought and suffered to stay here. That makes real people of men and women. I've lived in the west all my life and have watched the spirit of the pioneers come and go. This little settlement of ours is one of the fast disappearing spots that still has their spirit; it's a breeding place of something the nation is beginning to need."

"Just the same," said Ruth, "I don't want to live here. I want to see the east, and Broadway, and Paris, and the world."

"Of course you do, honey, and you shall," said Mary. "And when you have, you'll want to come straight back here to settle down."

Hours are early in the country. The evening was all too short for Hollington when the party broke up and he found the way to his room. He sat by the window for a long time before retiring, looking out on a darkened landscape, thinking of the people he had just left. They were so different from any he had ever known before. The outstanding fact was the love and harmony in the family circle. Another thing was that these people were natural, perfectly sure of themselves and of each other, and they really felt the friendliness they showed. Only

THE INTERLOPERS

later did it occur to him that though farmers and workers they were educated, well-read, and refined. What manner of people were they?"

He guardedly put the question to Clem Harding later.

"Why, they are just Americans."

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTMAS STORM

WHEN Hollington woke in the morning the fresh sunshine flooded his room. He stepped to the window to breathe the aromatic air of the garden and look out upon a vista of oranges and lemons set in the soil of a seed bed. Downstairs he found only Frances who was waiting to get him something to eat. The others had finished long before, and had gone to their appointed work.

"Good morning," she said, "I hope you slept well."

"Entirely too well, I'm afraid. I'm putting you to a great deal of trouble."

"Not at all. By the way, Dr. Alling has been here. He will be back just about the time you finish breakfast. Isn't it a lovely morning?"

"I'm already beginning to catch your mother's enthusiasm."

"Oh, and mine too," she replied, with a smile that made him grudge the sound of heavy footsteps in the front yard.

Dr. Alling shook hands cordially with both of the others.

"Sit right down, young man, and finish that meal. I'm about to work you so hard for the next two days that you're going to need food. I have to get away on Thursday, and do you know, Frances, it just

THE INTERLOPERS

breaks my old heart to do it. And as to the wife, I declare she wouldn't go with me if she thought I was able to take care of myself."

When Frances left the room for a moment the talk turned to some of Alling's cases, each doctor taking stock of the other, and each pleased with what he found. Frances did not attempt to interrupt them when she returned. She was surprised to notice that Dr. Alling was asking the younger man's advice on some process which had apparently been recently improved upon in a Boston clinic.

The two soon left to start on their round of calls. The first visit was to little Sadie McClure, who had been unfortunate enough to sprain her ankle by sliding off a roof.

"Well, well, what is this I hear?" cried Dr. Alling, as he entered the sick room. He called to the mother for the things he needed, and proceeded to ease the suffering in that poor swollen joint. When it was done, and the little patient made comfortable, Dr. Hollington was introduced.

"He will look out for you from now on, for I have to go to Chicago in a day or two. He is a thoroughly trained and skilful young man. I could not have found anyone better able to take my place."

"Meaning no disrespect to our new doctor, there is no one that can ever take your place. I don't see how we are going to get along without you at all."

"I know I'm going to miss the people terribly, and my old friend Mrs. McClure as much as anyone. I never can forget the many things you have

THE CHRISTMAS STORM.

done for me. Hollington, I am giving you a little advice. When you need something particularly choice for a convalescent you come here. Mrs. McClure is the best cook I have ever known, and with proper *savoir faire* I am sure you can persuade her to make anything you want."

"Indeed he can, sir, if you ask it. Do I really have to say good-bye to you? Oh, I know you will come back some time; no one could leave Rosario forever."

"I certainly could not. Good-bye, Mrs. McClure, and may God bless you."

There followed a succession of calls, and then to the office to keep the morning hours. Everywhere there was the same spirit of friendliness and regret. Hollington had believed at first that the reasons lay in the obvious superiority of the Coulters, and that Mrs. McClure had been included more or less by accident. But when it was the same with all it gave Hollington food for thought. He finally commented to Alling on the matter, asking him how he could act in so friendly a spirit to so many people.

"I am not acting, my boy. I don't pretend to care more for these people than I actually feel. If you're going to do justice to yourself and to Rosario, you must break through your Harvard reserve and be one of them. It is going to take time, and during that time you may be misunderstood. But you must try, try consciously; whenever you do like anyone, show it, my boy, show it. They want you

THE INTERLOPERS

to like them, and they'll size you up in time all right enough."

A frightened Mexican interrupted them. A rattle snake had bitten him in the arm not an hour before. His companions had tied a cord above the wound, then rushed him to the office.

"Here is something I'm glad to have you see, Hollington. It's one of the cases where western experience is better than eastern. Now, Manuel, don't be excited; you're in no danger and you'll not be hurt much. First I must put on the proper ligature." He took a roll of gauze about an inch wide, ran it lightly about the arm. Then he wound it around and around, steadily increasing the pressure, until by the time the spool was exhausted he was pulling almost as hard as he could. The cord was then removed, and the wound itself treated.

"Manuel, I want you to take this off slowly; take it off once around every ten minutes. Here is some medicine. Swallow it and go to bed. I will be around to see you this afternoon.

"The idea is this, Hollington. The poison in the snake fang is an acid, and a very powerful heart depressent. Neutralize that acid as well as you can with any alkali, and let the heart absorb it over a period of several hours. If the heart takes it too fast there will be excruciating pain, and even death, in rare cases. But if you take time enough, the heart can handle it very nicely."

In the afternoon when they called at Manuel's home they found his condition just what Alling had

THE CHRISTMAS STORM

predicted. Hollington was no longer surprised to observe that the dirty, dismal little shack made no more difference to Alling than did the primitive half-animal nature of the Mexican. Manuel was a patient, but Manuel and the entire Muchado family were friends. Their grief at Alling's plans for leaving was the least restrained of any; but if vociferous it was sincere.

When later the doctors looked in on the new baby of the Japanese truck gardener, Hollington would have been surprised had there not been manifestations of friendship on both sides. The lesson was learned; there remained now only to put it into practice.

By evening Hollington had a fair knowledge of Alling's cases, and had met many people. He had arranged to take over Dr. Alling's offices, and had found a place to board.

Thrown upon his own resources, Hollington did well from the first. That he was a good physician and surgeon goes without saying. Dr. Alling would have trusted his business in Rosario to no other. What the latter called Hollington's Harvard reserve was enough in evidence to keep the new doctor from taking too quickly the place of the old in the hearts of the people. But in due time this obstruction passed, and the good people of the valley grew to understand. They rather sympathized with what to them was shyness and diffidence.

Hollington was not of an impressionable nature. All the more remarkable was the influence of two

THE INTERLOPERS

days' intimate association with Dr. Alling. In that time was bred and developed the enthusiasm of the disciple. Then and there Hollington determined to dedicate his own life to following in the footsteps of the predecessor whom he so greatly admired. The doctor in Rosario should be more than a healer, just as a minister should be more than a teacher. In order to fulfill what he had grown to regard as his mission in life, he must make friends of the people, of all the people, as he had seen done. Then he must be prepared at all times to help them with advice, good advice and sympathetic.

As time passed he found a steady growth in his power to carry out this conception. He became really fond of his neighbors, though intimate with none except the Coulters. By the time the winter came he knew he was succeeding, for often people came to him as previously they had come to Alling. But the greatest tribute of all was when Sam Coulters himself began to take the young man into his confidence, and to look to him for occasional help.

Then came a catastrophe.

Christmas eve it began to rain. All night the life-giving water fell with a steady patter. Rosario was happy; as the storm kept on into Christmas the delighted inhabitants pattered around in the mud, exchanging gifts and greetings, a smile on every face. They saw their citrus crop sparkling with the golden promise of dreams come true. More than one happy parent pored over the catalogue of a

THE CHRISTMAS STORM

boarding-school, or added a long coveted luxury to the family budget.

In the afternoon the downpour became fitful; by midnight an occasional star could be seen, and before dawn the cold north wind had cleared the sky of every vestige of cloud. The storm was past, but it had been magnificent; more than two inches of water had fallen.

Over the ground where the storm had been the atmosphere was so light as to form a partial vacuum. The heavier air from the outside rushed in to fill it, and from the friction came heat, which was absorbed from the incoming air. So nature maintains her balances.

The beneficent wind from the ocean was thrust aside by its rival from the north which swept down from the snowy Sierra in cold dry blasts withering to the very heart of nature.

Ceaseless it came on and on. The sun shone down from a clear sky, and the earth gave up its moisture. By sunset the soil was drying fast, and the persistent assaults on the temperature began to tell. Down below forty went the thermometer, below thirty-five. At thirty-two the last protection of nature was reached, the latent heat of freezing. For one hour, for two, until a telltale ice-scum showed the final triumph of the invader.

Then it was that Sam Coulters, his hand on his watch and his eye on the recording dial, called in man, man with his puny resources. By midnight a hundred thousand smudge-pots, filled and placed

THE INTERLOPERS

two months before, were vomiting up their black smoke and overspreading the valley.

Every man, woman, and child was out with a torch. Dr. Hollington was drawn to the Coulters' with the others. It was all new to him; no one had time to tell him what it meant. But he soon found himself working down his row, a swarthy Mexican on one side, Frances herself on the other. She gave an occasional smile of encouragement. And he surprised himself no less than her by crossing to her and telling her what a pleasure it was to him to be really coöperating with her.

"Look out; you will lose some of that dignity!" and they both laughed.

At last the work was done, and a tired group of farm-hands and neighbors collected in the Coulters' kitchen. Hot coffee and thick slices of bread were passed around. In the genial atmosphere that follows hard work and success Mrs. Warner went to Dr. Hollington.

"I want to shake hands with you, young man. I have heard more than one nice thing said of you tonight."

"Why, I did only what everyone was doing."

"I know. That is what we all liked. We feel now that you are one of us."

"Welcome to our city," giggled Ruth. "Just the same, she's right."

"Now people, we have a hard day ahead of us, so we must all get what rest we can. There is not enough of the night remaining to hurt us." Sam

THE CHRISTMAS STORM

Coulters was saving his resources, the strength of his family and friends.

"Pretty soon the sun will come up," said Clem Harding, "and he'll smile at us, and say, 'Now you folks, just let me take care of this, it's easy!'"

With varying hours of sleep the people of the valley straggled to work the next morning. The smudge-pots had to be filled. Many used briquettes, a composition of sawdust and petroleum. More had small tanks to hold crude oil. In either case a wagon with fuel travelled endlessly from one row to another, while two or three or four people trudged beside it, preparing pot after pot for the coming of the night.

The irrigation ditches were opened and the orchards flooded. Brush was hauled, prunings were gathered, all possible preparations were made. But mostly it was pots, pots, till the mind itself was smudged by the thought of them.

Always the cold north wind, unchanging and remorseless. If colder than the day before, it was still the same wind, for the forces in opposition were weakening. Many a time the lowering temperatures of the two days were checked, but never with encouragement. At three o'clock the thermometer began to fall in earnest, and at sunset had almost touched the freezing point.

It was a repetition of the previous night, but the smudge-pots were lighted hours earlier. Once more the tired orchardists had to tramp through the dark, wet groves, and once more the answering smoke

THE INTERLOPERS

filled the skies. It checked the fall of the thermometer, but bursting water pipes and ice-coated pools showed how triumphant still was the relentless enemy from the north.

So Sam ordered the firing of the barricade. Against such a contingency had the prunings of two seasons been piled along the north and northwest corners of the valley. Every few hundred yards were these monuments of foresight, many of them larger than a cottage. When they burst into flame the orchards were guarded by a wall of fire that Boreas could not hope to overcome. But he was never a bit discouraged. "I will blow those flames and make them all the hotter. And when that brush is ashes I will push the warm air out of that lovely valley, and then—ha! ha!"

"We might as well quit now," said Sam Coulters, "all except the men who are tending the fires. They'll protect us until one o'clock. If the wind shifts by that time we're safe; if it blows all night we're going to be badly hurt. In either event we've done all that could have been done. I'm going to get some rest, and I advise you all to do the same. Perhaps in daylight things will not seem so hopeless."

But victory lay with the Hun. Not until the sun had struggled for hours did the west wind come into its own. And then the beautiful valley lay prostrate under a blow from which it never fully recovered. Hardy native plants, the wild tobacco and the sumach, were shrivelled as though by a wave of fire.

THE CHRISTMAS STORM

Gardens and ornamental trees suffered still more. Even the olive, seemingly unscathed, had sloughed its crop to save itself. And the citrus, the most delicate of them all!

The trees were dying from the tips of the branches toward the heart. Probably there were few of them but could be saved, but all that could be kept alive would be a short, bare stump. For the tender shoots had gone first, and the march of death could be followed to the older twigs, to the main branches themselves, to the very trunks.

And the fruit, the bread and butter, the necessities and happiness of the people. There are thousands upon thousands of tiny vials in an orange. When the juice within them freezes it bursts the membranes, leaving within the skin a pulpy mass that at once begins to decay. As beautiful as ever to look upon, yet utterly worthless.

CHAPTER III

J. P. BUTLER & Co.

“J. P. Butler & Co., Real Estate, Loans, and Insurance.”

The sign was generously spread over a large plate glass window. Around the window was a building with a door, and a fire wall in front intimating a two-story structure. The office was in full view of the street; contents, one swivel and two straight chairs, a roll-top desk, a cuspidor, and a waste basket, maps and advertising pictures on the wall, and dust everywhere; the effect within was strain, but the sign without was gorgeous.

Beside the open desk sat J. P. Butler & Co., the somewhat slovenly man being Butler, and the company the dusty surroundings. Before the man lay a letter bearing the printed heading of “The Nippon Merchandise Co.” He was puzzling over its contents, his eyes half-closed, and his hand gently caressing his chin.

The letter was a general request for information as to the chance of buying a citrus grove at a low price. Business, never very large at this office, was particularly dull just now; the broker wanted money, and the outlook at Rosario was not flattering.

His fingers idly drummed his lot book, but he did not open it. It contained a list of every piece of property in Eden Valley, with the name of the

J. P. BUTLER & CO.

owner, and the amount of and holder of every incumbrance. It seemed there usually was one. Butler knew the contents of this book pretty thoroughly; his living had been made for many years by placing these mortgages.

The result of his meditations was a trip to the coast. He gave some attention to his personal appearance before he presented himself at the Southern California Bank. As an out of town correspondent who had sent quite a bit of valuable business there, he was courteously received by the president.

"How do you do, Mr. Butler," said that affable man of affairs, "you certainly are looking well."

"I'm feeling first rate, but I'm just a little worried, so I thought I would drop in here."

"You Rosarians were hard hit. It's bad enough along the coast, but nothing by comparison."

"I know it, Mr. Barlow. That is why I have come to see you. You have made so many of your Eden Valley loans through me that I feel a great deal of responsibility."

"You mean the situation is as serious as that?"

"I can't see where those men are coming out. How can they pay? How can they even meet their interest or taxes? It will be a full year before they get any real crops. How will they keep on? They nearly all owe money on the crops that were lost; where is it to be had?"

"Yes, I know, they've lost their gross receipts for a year."

"And no business in the world can stand that."

THE INTERLOPERS

"No business could, but some men can. I've given this matter a good deal of thought, and I confess that it's bothering me quite a little. I know you didn't come here just to frighten me. You have some idea in mind; what is it?"

"Well, as I said, I feel partly to blame, and I want to keep my record clear. I think the thing for you to do is to let me sell some of the mortgages for you."

"No one would buy without the bank's guarantee, and then we would be in just so much the worse shape for having lost control."

"I think perhaps I could sell some for you without that."

"Look here, Butler, that's not the way we do business. If you think I'm going to sell that paper to men who will foreclose—."

"Don't be angry, please. We can't govern what the buyer does, Mr. Barlow. I was thinking of my responsibility."

"Of your commissions! Of your chance to make a few dollars out of your neighbors' troubles. If you can bring me any kind of a proposition by which I can help those poor people without jeopardizing my stockholders' interests, come back here. That is the only kind of business I want with Eden Valley just now. Good morning!"

When the firm of J. P. Butler & Co. reached the sidewalk it was with a somewhat diminished air of confidence. The Southern California Bank appeared with lamentable frequency in the lot book. And so

many of the choicest holdings were marked with its name. Of the other loans, one after another was held out of town, or for some other reason was unavailable. The Warner place seemed to offer the best, if not the only opportunity. The loan on it was small and it had but a short time to run. The farm was marketable. Mrs. Warner had recently been through a prolonged illness, which had exhausted every family resource up to the frozen crop.

So it came about that old Arthur Speirs, who held the mortgage, listened to much the same tale as was told to the bank president, listened with fear and trembling, for it was adorned with many embellishments that the astute agent had not dared to use in his former interview. Arthur Speirs had no high philanthropic motives; the Warners were impersonal to him. His money was in danger, a part of his income might be lost, he was rattled and badly frightened, facts which, skilfully played upon, resulted in a very satisfactory option made out to the long established and highly respectable firm of J. P. Butler & Co.

Hanba was the leading spirit of the Nippon Merchandise Co. He was the better dressed, the better educated, and even spoke the better English of the two, when Butler was in his store.

"Eden Valley? No."

"But the trees will come back." Butler was sitting close to his customer, and speaking in a low, confidential tone, although the two were alone in a large office. His salesmanship was of the "can't you

THE INTERLOPERS

see it?" type, his explanations were those of a school teacher, both as to the pains taken and as to the mental attitude assumed. Frequently he would emphasize a point by gently tapping his hearer on the knee. "The roots and the trunks are still alive. In one year you will be picking fruit. And think of the price. Two thousand dollars will buy that mortgage, and with five hundred to me for my option; only a hundred dollars an acre, with houses and machinery and water rights thrown in. It is less than two dollars apiece for the trees, with everything else for nothing."

"But I do not understand this way of buying. If I pay two thousand five hundred dollars why do I not own the place?"

"Now listen; that mortgage has three months to run. If he pays it, you get your money back and you get interest. If he does not, you pay me five hundred dollars and the place is yours. In a year it will be worth fifteen thousand."

"Is this all right? Is this the way to do business in this country?"

"Why, certainly, it's all right. Do you think the Southern California Bank would do this if it were not all right? Look in this book and see the mortgages they own. You know the Warner property and you know it's exactly what you want. And you know that it's worth five, six, eight hundred dollars an acre. This is a gamble; he may pay, but even then you can't lose. I'll tell you what to do; let us go to your lawyer."

J. P. BUTLER & CO.

"We will do that. I will not do anything that is not perfectly honorable. If Mr. McGowan tells me the same things that you have, I will buy your mortgage. But I will not pay you five hundred dollars; I will pay one hundred and fifty."

After much haggling two hundred and sixty-five dollars was agreed upon. Then came the visit to the attorney. McGowan was a lawyer with all that the word implies. The papers and the question were submitted to him. The mortgage, the certificate, and the option were all regular; it took him but a few moments to pass upon them. And the transaction itself? Why, certainly. Years of delving into intricate legal problems had robbed him of any point of view other than what was according to law must be right. To him, Hanba, Butler, and Warner alike were only markers in the game.

It was decided that the best way to handle the situation was for McGowan to take over the mortgage as trustee and hold it until such time as it should be either satisfied or foreclosed. So Speirs was repaid his loan, less a hundred dollar commission, McGowan was satisfied because every paper was perfectly drawn; Butler, because of the money he already had, and the larger amount which he was determined to get; Hanba, because the true Oriental is a born gambler, and Warner, well, there has to be a loser in every game; anyway no one took the trouble to tell him.

When Butler had returned, and was once more established in his office in Rosario, he found him-

THE INTERLOPERS

self the object of quite general interest. Coulters was one of his first callers.

"We've been waiting for your return with a good deal of interest," said Coulters to the broker. "I suppose you saw Barlow?"

"Oh yes. That's why I went down. So many loans have been placed with him through me, that I thought I owed it to the valley to put matters before him in its best light. I wanted to get at him before those coast knockers could influence him. They are trying to borrow a great deal of money to develop Silver Cliffs, and are just small enough to figure that the less we get the more they will obtain."

"How does Barlow stand?"

"He said to me, word for word, 'If you can bring me any kind of a proposition by which I can help those poor people without jeopardizing my stockholders, come back with it.' Mr. Barlow is a man whom I am proud to number among my friends, and I certainly am glad I went to him."

"You feel sure that he will at least give us plenty of time?"

"Beyond any question."

"And do you think he'll help us any more than that?"

"He might. I tell you what to do. Figure out the amount that is going to be needed, and work it up into some businesslike proposition, then we will consult him. I did not like to go any further than I did at first, nor until I knew just what I wanted him to do."

J. P. BUTLER & CO.

All his visitors who were indebted to the Southern California Bank were told the same thing. It was the subject of a carefully written interview in the *Rosario Record*, a marked copy of which was promptly mailed to Mr. Barlow. And as no denial was ever forthcoming Butler's story was not questioned.

Among his callers on this first day was Warner.

"Oh, yes, I saw Mr. Speirs," said Butler. "He was very uneasy at first, but when I left him I knew that he had no intention of foreclosing."

"I am very glad to hear that. You see I have given a trust deed, not a mortgage. And so I have no chance to redeem. I must either get that money somewhere else, if I can, or get an extension from Speirs."

"I know he will not foreclose. But as to asking him for a long extension, I don't know."

"Perhaps I'd best go to San Diego and see him. Then when I find out just what he'll do I can have the papers drawn, and close the whole matter at once."

"That is the wrong way to go about it, entirely wrong. I had a long talk with him, and everything is all right. But if you go to him and show him that you are uneasy he may grow uneasy too. A very peculiar man. So easy to get an idea into his head, but so nearly impossible to get one out of it."

"What shall I do?"

"You just leave it all to me. I will fix it for you. How much more time do you want?"

THE INTERLOPERS

"I think I can clear it all right in two years. I know I can in three."

"That can be arranged for you easily enough. Don't give the matter another thought. The next time I go to town I'll attend to it."

"When are you going?"

"Before long. I don't know exactly."

Supper that night at the Warners' was a very cheerful meal. A little reaction came from the call on Butler. One thing, at least, could have been worse. The first smile was contagious, for the whole family was eager to rebound from its depression. The overshadowing topic of conversation was the education of the children. The parents knew that for themselves the next few years meant harder work and greater denials than had ever been their lot before. They knew it and accepted it, so there was nothing further to be said.

Richard was the oldest son. He was in his junior year at Hopkins. To his family, at least, his record was one of brilliant scholarship. He not only had a big future before him because of his marked ability as an engineer, but he had already reached a point where, between prizes won and outside work, he had become self-supporting. It would be little less than cruel to call him home at this time.

Could the farm be kept going by the father and the younger son, the latter a youth of seventeen who had inherited his mother's delicate constitution? Deland Warner, worshipping his elder brother, would listen to no other plan. The father was se-

rious, for he could estimate the work that had to be done, and knew how hopeless it was to even think of engaging hired help. And there was Jeanette, as pretty and as sweet a bit of girlhood as any valley could boast. Did it all mean for her a department store counter? Would high school have to be given up, and normal become an abandoned dream?

Yes, unquestionably. She smiled through her tears, protesting that she was glad to do what she could for them. They petted her, and praised her, promising that it would not be for long, that their very first crop would put her back on the road to her ambition. But they were serious, too, they knew what a lonely home theirs would be, for they loved the daughter of their house no less than she loved them.

Warner and Deland turned to a discussion of the farm work, how it could be handled and how divided. They agreed that the first thing they must do was to cut from the fruit trees all the dead wood, the wood that had been killed by the cold. There was imperative need to have this done before the warm weather started the spring flow of sap. They would probably be a little late in completing that task, and would be behind with all the farm work for a long time to come. But by working a little harder than they had ever done, and having no crop to be lost by their tardiness, they could probably leave Richard in the east.

Mrs. Warner and Jeanette might have plunged into talk about the changed prospects of the latter

THE INTERLOPERS

and the coming separation, but they tacitly reserved the subject for feminine privacy, contenting themselves with listening to the plans of their men, and occasionally offering a suggestion.

Later in the evening the Kraemers came in from across the road. They had been friends and neighbors in the far back Iowa days. Their only child, a babyhood playmate of Jeanette, was but a memory now, the memory of golden curls and roguish smiles and happy laughter. On the Warner children they lavished the affection that craved an outlet; they mothered them until these seven people were almost as one family.

As was the custom, the two households walked together to the store and post office, a half mile away. They met many of their neighbors this evening, on the same errand bound. And the exchange of greetings and of queries as to welfare held more than the usual significance. It was characteristic of these people that they had discounted their losses, and with few exceptions were making no complaints. Instead, they were asking or telling about what had been saved, and taking pleasure in any little thing that had escaped. And they were full of the future as it was to be, not as it might have been.

Mrs. Warner was not at all reticent in telling the family plans, in fact she seemed rather glad to have generally known what had been decided upon that evening. The way her friends received the news showed the universal esteem in which the Warners were held. They were in no sense leaders as the

J. P. BUTLER & CO.

Coulters were. They were of those whom everyone likes, which is sometimes different from being of those whom everyone follows.

Warner's days, and those of his son Deland, were strenuous ones. Both men were in the orchards at daylight, and both came home at dark, utterly fatigued. Little by little they decreased the area of apparently dead trees. The brush pile grew to amazing proportions, and there was a very gratifying number of healthy looking stumps, properly trimmed and protected with wax.

The details of arranging for the extension of the loan were being neglected, and Warner knew it. But he was too tired evenings to look up Butler, and too concentrated on his work to be willing to leave it in the daytime. Several weeks elapsed before he forced himself to go to the broker. He was assured that Speirs had recently been in correspondence with Butler, that matters stood exactly where they did at the time of the first interview, and that the formalities would be gone through with in due season.

The time had come, however, to take Jeanette to town, and to establish her there, both in the store where she would work, and with the people with whom she would board. Her father was to take her down, so he told Butler that he himself would see Speirs.

Butler thought it over. With his eye on the calendar, his thumb pressing his chin on one side while his forefinger stroked the other, he was trying to

THE INTERLOPERS

fit one more move into the puzzle he was determined to solve.

One day three or four months later, while the broker was writing in his office, the door was opened, and Sam Coulters walked in.

"Hello, Sam. I suppose, since you're all dressed up, that you're going to town?"

"I've just returned." His face was cold as a statue. "Didn't you know that Barlow would repeat what you said to him?"

"He told you that I tried to persuade him to sell his mortgages?"

"Yes."

"That's what he really believes. But I was only trying to find out what he would do. I wanted to make sure, and I did."

"There's another mistake you made. I suppose you thought Hanba would keep still?"

Butler's face turned to a pasty white.

"You've three hundred and sixty-five dollars of blood money. Give me a check for that amount, and Richard Warner can get his degree. Then pack and go where no one of us will ever see you again."

"You can't talk to me like that and get away with it. Business—"

"I'm not going to talk to you much more. I don't enjoy it. And I'm not going to listen to you at all. But unless you do exactly what I've told you to do, I'm going to Harry Warner and tell him some things that will interest him.

"All about your little chat with Barlow, for in-

J. P. BUTLER & CO.

stance, and with Speirs, and with Hanba, and with McGowan. How you lied about Speirs' intentions, and how you later intimidated the poor old man into being your confederate. How Speirs was so upset over the whole transaction that he moved heaven and earth to take that loan up again, but simply could not do it. I will tell Harry how you dangled him with your damnable lies until it was too late for him to get that money elsewhere. And how, with your hypocritical offers of help you blocked every one of the desperate efforts of himself and his friends to do something. It all unwound easily enough, after I had once forced Hanba to talk. If I tell Harry that you threw him and his whole family into poverty for the sake of three hundred and sixty-five dollars, what do you think he is going to do?

"Kill you! All he can do is to kill you, and he'll do so without a moment's hesitation. There was a time in his life before he went to Iowa that you don't know about as well as I do. He seldom speaks of it himself; but Clem Harding knew him in those days. If I tell this story he'll forget the thirty years that passed between Nevada and that sheriff's sale, and all hell couldn't keep him off from you.

"I'm giving you a chance simply because I don't want to see him in trouble any deeper than he already is. But if he does kill you he'll do so here, among his friends, and so long as I'm a deputy sheriff we'll hang any jury that tries him. You have no chance, Butler. Give me that check."

THE INTERLOPERS

It was done. "It will take some time to wind up my business, Sam. You wouldn't be so hard if you knew all the circumstances—"

"Your train leaves in about two hours. I'll attend to closing your business. Everything will be carefully accounted for, and the proceeds turned over to Mrs. Warner. I'm going now to cash this check. Be sure not to miss that train."

Later in the afternoon Coulters stopped at Hollington's office to take him home for supper.

"I hear that Butler has left town," said Robert, "was it not rather sudden?"

"I don't know."

"I supposed you knew all about it, for I saw you talking with him this afternoon."

"Oh no, Robert, you are mistaken. I have not seen him for days."

"All right," laughed the young doctor. "I suppose that bulge in your hip pocket is natural?"

"Sometimes we have to do unpleasant things. One of those times happened today. It is best to try to forget it."

"Doctors are trained not to gossip. Do you know, Sam, you are a big man. If this whole valley knew what I do, everyone would say, 'If Sam ran him out of town, he must have had good reasons.' I don't know of a soul who would think of asking why, except for motives of curiosity."

"Here's the old Warner place," said Coulters. Old—doesn't the word hurt? If Speirs had sold to a white man, I could have saved Warner. You can

always reach a man if you know how. No white man would try to keep that place under the circumstances, he couldn't endure the adverse opinion of a community."

"There are thick skinned people who would stand it if they were making money."

"I can't imagine not being able to stop a man by some means. But these Japanese! They understand only what they want to, and are hardly interested in what we think. They're scrappy beggars, their whole army is behind them and they know it, you can't scare them out. Hanba appears to regard McGowan as the court of last resort. From his own point of view his actions are irreproachable. He's not responsible for our laws, nor does he interpret them; he merely follows the best advice he can get. He simply refuses, whether wilfully or not I really don't know, to adopt our customs along with our laws."

"There seems to be quite a few men there. Is Hanba with them?"

"Hanba is merely an agent. The money was furnished from Japan; there is probably a certain amount of government backing. The men you see are peasants of the lowest type."

"Why so many?"

"They're doing a great deal more than Harry ever attempted. It must be the intensive farming of which we have so long heard. Hello, there's Clem."

The old frontiersman was leaning over a fence,

THE INTERLOPERS

his head resting on his arms, his pose one he might have been holding indefinitely. He didn't hear his friends approach until Sam called to him:

"Hello, Clem, what's new?"

"I was just thinking that I'm not lawyer enough to know how these Japanese got here, nor minister enough to know if it's right for them to stay; but I do know that the valley was a lot better off with Warner than with them, and that a valley full of such people wouldn't be nearly as good a thing for the country as our dear old Rosario."

And so the first of the Mongolian orchardists came to be in Eden Valley.

CHAPTER IV

SAM COULTERS PLAYS POLITICS

AFTER dinner that evening Frances and Robert drifted out upon the porch. Mrs. Coulters was busy about the house, and her husband had a meeting to attend down in the village. The meetings were important these days, for there were always some poor, despondent souls who really needed encouragement. Ruth had given up boarding school, but she conscientiously devoted her evenings to keeping up her studies.

"You have only been here six months," Frances was saying, "yet you have changed a great deal."

"Have I? In what way?"

"Do you remember that Clem Harding met you when you came? He told me all about your drive from the depot. The part I remember most clearly was his saying that while you had learned his whole history, he had not even found out your name. If you had that same drive to take today with a stranger, you would let him learn a little—not much, but still something."

"The comparison is not fair. I was not prepared for people such as you Rosarians. My preconceived idea of farmers came from stage caricatures, I'm afraid. So I'd planned to devote all my thoughts to medicine."

THE INTERLOPERS

"You didn't come with a very high opinion of us, did you?"

"Certainly not. I didn't know there was such a pure democracy in the world. Dr. Alling first opened my eyes. He has nothing to yield on family to any of my old circle, and where I was brought up we regard family as a matter of some importance. Professionally, there are not many of his age who have made a higher mark. I know better than you the meaning of that appointment he received when he left here. And personally,—well, you knew him much more intimately than I."

"He did have a wonderful personality, didn't he?"

"He certainly did. Do you wonder that I fell under his influence? If it hadn't been for him where would I have learned to appreciate the people here?"

"That may have helped, but the change is really inside. Six months ago you wouldn't have talked like this to anyone. By the way, what did you mean by calling us such a pure democracy?"

"Simply that you do not recognize caste. You admit no social superiority above you, and you don't claim much social inferiority below you. According to all precedent, people living on small farms and doing their own work, men and women as well, as a class, you understand, should rank but little above the unskilled laborer. And yet, if you gave the matter any thought you would regard yourselves as just about on a par with Millionaire's Row in Coronado. But of course you don't give the matter any thought, for the very existence of this condition depends on

SAM COULTERS PLAYS POLITICS

your not doing so. It all affects character in the aggregate. Yielding servility to some, demanding even more servility from others, is bound to leave an impression."

"Do you often hear from Dr. Alling?"

"Oh, yes, regularly. He tells me about his experiences in Chicago, asks about his old friends here, and gives me good advice."

"What sort of advice?"

"He has high ideals of the position a doctor should occupy in such a place as this. He thinks I can and should exert a strong influence for good in this valley. Carry it out to its logical conclusion, I should not only treat the sick but minister to diseased minds. Moreover I should help to keep the community in good health, and that implies interference in the most minute details of family life. For it is the countless little things that in the aggregate determine whether you are to be well and strong or not. He had all the zeal of a reformer, and sometimes he's afraid I'm not taking my work seriously enough."

"I don't see why he should be. With both of you, medicine is as much a religion as a profession. Only you're even worse than Dr. Alling; because you are younger, I suppose, and so have more enthusiasm. By the way, didn't you say something at dinner to night about having gone to see one of the Japanese boys on the old Warner place? The conversation turned just then, and I had no opportunity to ask about it."

THE INTERLOPERS

"One of them was kicked by a horse and had his leg broken, a nasty fracture above the knee."

"How do they live, how do they keep house?"

"An impossible mixture of their customs and ours. Do you remember those two days Dr. Alling spent in taking me everywhere, to fit me to be his successor? The truck gardener had a lot of extra work to do at that time; he had fourteen men sleeping in one small room. And instead of doing everything they could for ventilation, they burned scented punk to make the room habitable. At the Warner place, where they're not crowded for room, it's only by threats that I can get my patient enough fresh air. Yet most of our rules of hygiene they accept with implicit faith, often not even pretending to understand them.

"For the most part their food comes to them in kegs or crates from the Nippon Merchandise company in San Diego. I didn't pay much attention, for I thought it best not to change the diet. The race has lived on it so many centuries that their system needs it. Some of them use chairs occasionally, but sitting on the floor is more natural. The Warners took their furniture out, as you remember, and there's been very little put in to replace it. Rooms that are not being used have been allowed to accumulate dust and trash. A few cheap Japanese pictures are on the wall, and there are some Japanese books and old newspapers scattered about, usually on the floor. The garden is overgrown with weeds and is

SAM COULTERS PLAYS POLITICS

dying, and everywhere is the smell that tells of a different race.

"The foreman's wife came in while I was there. She had been out with her children; one of them she led by the hand, the other was in a baby buggy. She had dressed herself, as well as them, in European clothes. No style and no fit, but clean; that the trio could roam about the country and come in so nearly immaculate is little short of a miracle. There is one of their inconsistent contrasts.

"They're an interesting people, quick, imitative, and responsive, until unexpectedly you encounter the stone wall that marks their limitations. Beyond that you have the mind of primitive man. I don't even try to understand them, although they amuse and interest me. I've found that you can't argue them into much nor drive them into anything, but that they're very susceptible to ridicule. Would you like to go over there with me sometime?"

"Very much. Oh, no, I couldn't, not to the Warner place. Doesn't it bother you?"

"The manner of the Warners leaving did, more than you know. But there are two entirely separate conditions here, and I don't feel that I'm showing any disloyalty to Harry Warner and his family by treating that boy with the broken leg, nor by being friendly with the others. Besides—why, here comes your father!"

"And he doesn't look any too well. Father, you're tired."

THE INTERLOPERS

"I'm worried; have you heard about the Kraemers?"

"No, what about them?"

"The interest that Hanba represents, whatever it is, has bought them out. They had almost completed a deal to sell to a northern buyer, but he dropped it cold when he heard that he would have a Japanese colony for a neighbor. Kraemer grew discouraged. No one knows just what he was paid, but the price was ridiculous. The Kraemers were lonely without the Warners, and are going to San Diego to make a home for Jeanette. Perhaps they will be happier, but Schumacker and Hancock have now become contiguous to Hanba's men. Both are bitter toward the Kraemers for having done them what they regard an injury. Both sides have friends who are taking up the quarrel, and there's more feeling in this valley than I've ever seen before. I don't like it at all, but I don't know how to stop it.

"There was a good deal of rough talk to-night. Some, frightened by the rather mysterious way in which the two deals were made, and not knowing where the infection would stop, openly advocated running the Japanese out of the valley. It can't be done, not permanently, but it wasn't easy to get the idea suppressed."

"Which means, I suppose, that people still do what father tells them to, but that he had to fight them to-night to make them."

"I suppose I might as well admit it. I don't want to lose my grip just now, especially if we are going

SAM COULTERS PLAYS POLITICS

to have trouble. And we surely would have had it if those hot heads had had their way."

"Are you afraid that the Japanese colony will grow much larger?" asked Robert.

"It is sure to, for the simple reason that they can make it pay. I don't mind telling you that the situation is serious. I've been in Rosario eighteen years, Robert, and have seen this valley go through a great many ups and downs. There have been seasons, one after another, when we would make a yearly profit equal to half the value of our farms. On the other hand, last winter's freeze is only one of a series of disasters. We've had years so dry that our trees shrivelled and our crops became valueless. Time and again insect pests, the scale and the spider, have ruined our fruit. I've seen our markets so glutted that we simply couldn't sell. Carload after carload of fruit has left here to be put on the auction block in the east without bringing enough to pay freight."

"Nothing has ever hurt us as much as that awful Christmas storm, and yet we're pulling through. On the whole, we're pretty good fighters; the weaker ones have dropped out, one by one, as the years went by. We are facing a hard summer, harder, perhaps, than any of us know. Left to ourselves we'd win out somehow; we always have. But there is no margin of safety, none at all. Every resource will be exhausted.

"That's why this new trouble is so bad. Two small farms held by the Japanese don't amount to

THE INTERLOPERS

anything, and with all the feeling there is, I don't think as yet there's much uneasiness. But look ahead; if they can make two pay, twenty would do the same. I know they can, even better than they do themselves. The time to stop this thing is now."

"Can you do it, father?"

"I can try," was the grim answer.

So Sam Coulters went down out of the mountains, and paid a visit to an old friend. Rutherford White was more than a friend, he was popularly regarded as the political boss of the southwestern counties. He was thoroughly glad to see the mountaineer, and his welcome showed it.

"And now tell us what you're doing in this part of the world?" asked the politician.

"I came to see you," said Coulters, who didn't often indulge in finesse.

"You know I'm always glad to do anything I can for you."

"There's something you have to do for me now, whether you can or not. The governor has called the legislature in special session next month. I want a law passed to prevent the Japanese from owning land in California."

"Gee, but that is a big order. Tell us about it." So Sam told of the experience in Rosario, and of his fears for the future. White listened with close attention, and at the conclusion answered:

"I see there is no use trying to offer you anything else. I will see Diester in Sacramento, and let you know if your wish can possibly be fulfilled."

SAM COULTERS PLAYS POLITICS

"That will never do, never in the world. I want that legislation, not a lot of explanations and kind regrets. You and I have worked together and been friends for a long time, but this is bigger than friendship. If I can't get what I want through you, I'm going where I can. Honestly now, you aren't going to force me to go to Buddy Haynes?"

"No! I told you I would do all I could."

"Let us put our hands on the table. Diester will do this for you if you trade him enough. You have so much asked of you that your trading stock won't go round, and you figure you can only afford a certain amount to keep Rosario in line. Ordinarily you could try to barter with me, but just now you can't. Haynes has given you the fight of your life and while you have him beaten, yet you are counting on my vote and on Clark and Redding. I know what your majority in the county central committee is; it is just four. And you know why Clark and Redding will vote as I tell them. Come now, don't make me threaten you, do I get my law?"

"You win, but you'll have to come to Sacramento to help."

The weeks of inaction waiting for the legislature to meet were a trial to Coulters. For he was a fighter rather than a strategist. Three more farms were bought in Hanba's name during that period, in spite of Sam's almost frantic efforts to keep his people together. There was the little Frenchman, Delaque. He had been unable to get an extension on his mortgage, and he blamed this failure on in-

THE INTERLOPERS

terference by Hanba. Whatever the truth of the matter might be, the fact was that one of the latter's emissaries offered Delaque a few hundred dollars for his equity. And as the tender was carefully timed so as to catch the owner in a fit of despondency, and so skilfully handled as to exaggerate his fear that he might get nothing, the deal was closed without much ado. Hancock, still protesting that Kraemer had been a renegade, inconsistently sold his own place to Hanba, and left the valley over night.

Then there was Packhard's farm. The peculiar conditions attending its purchase were at once puzzling and menacing. It lay almost across the valley from the Warner homestead. Though of only twenty acres, it was the show place of Rosario, and was surrounded by carefully kept orchards. The one striking, outstanding fact was that Ralph Packhard had demanded and obtained its fair market value. Could all this mean anything except a deep strategic move? If that were the case, then there must be an organized effort to drive every white man from Eden Valley.

It seemed to Coulters as though the days had never dragged as they did the week before the legislature met. But the time finally did come for him to go to Sacramento. More anxious was he than when he had last seen White. Indeed, he had no settled plan beyond this law that he had been promised. White and Coulters together called on Diester. White had been true to his pledge; everything was

SAM COULTERS PLAYS POLITICS

arranged with the big state boss and neither politician anticipated any difficulties. They discussed the wording of the bill, they discussed the arguments to be used in its favor, and all the time Diester, who had asked to meet Coulters, studied the rancher with interest. So this was the man who was strong enough to make the great state machine obey his mandate! Such a personality was worth knowing, for there was no telling when it might be useful.

Coulters had reached Sacramento charged with enthusiasm for the fight on his bill. He had expected to work incessantly, to meet legislators and senators, to plead with the country members, and to argue with the committeemen. He was prepared to overcome opposition, to conquer lethargy, to lobby with heart and soul. He had told himself that he must not overestimate Diester's influence, that while the latter's aid was absolutely necessary, it was himself and no other who would force the lawmakers to save Rosario.

He was by instinct an organizer. He had been on the inside of many a factional fight in his district, and in his county. So he considered himself pretty well posted on how business would be done at the capital. Yet he was astonished at the progress of his bill, once Diester had ordered it passed.

It was introduced simultaneously in the upper and lower house, and turned over to the committees without comment. By them it was reported favorably and without delay, and without discussion as far as Coulters knew. When in due time it was called up

THE INTERLOPERS

no opposition appeared. A labor member from San Francisco seized the opportunity to attack the Japanese all along the line. A rancher from the Oroville country spoke feelingly of some local experiences. The question was put to a vote; a few perfunctory ayes, no noes, and it was done.

Diester, White, and Coulters called on the governor. The chief executive looked ostentatiously at his watch, as he began to question Coulters. The first few answers brought an end to the effort to rush the interview. The head of the state was interested—interested in the man no less than in the measure. Here was a lobbyist who was unselfishly pleading for others; a crusader in practical politics. It was so refreshing, such a contrast to the sordid routine of his office, that when a secretary tried to interrupt him he waved the man aside and told Coulters to continue.

And Sam poured out his heart to a man who really cared, the first he had met since leaving home. When he had finished the governor formally shook his hand.

"I will sign your bill, Mr. Coulters, and I am proud to do so. If you gentlemen," he added, turning to the others, "would come to me oftener with laws like this, and a man like this, my life would not be quite so much of a grind."

The mountaineer returned to his hotel, tired but happy. After all, five farms held by the aliens was not a very serious matter. Besides, it was now only a question of time until the titles would revert to the

SAM COULTERS PLAYS POLITICS

whites. It was characteristic that he did not speculate on what the results of a possible failure might have been. Nor did he flood Rosario with self-laudatory telegrams. In fact he sent only one. It was to his wife, and said simply that he would start home the following day. And the faithful spouse, reading between the lines, and having had a quarter century of experience, knew that her strong mate had once more put his shoulder to a task and had done so with success.

At twelve o'clock noon there was to take place the formal signing of the now famous Japanese land-owners' bill. Coulters had remained in Sacramento one extra day in order to attend the ceremony. But at nine o'clock a uniformed messenger arrived from the executive mansion, demanding Sam's immediate presence.

He was admitted, without delay, to the governor's study.

"I sent for you to tell you some very disagreeable news, Mr. Coulters. Your enemies have a long reach. The matter we discussed yesterday was taken up in Washington between our secretary of state and the Japanese ambassador. An hour ago I received a telegram from the president himself; a telegram I could not disregard."

"Then you mean—you are undecided about that bill?"

"I am very sorry, Mr. Coulters, and very much ashamed of our national diplomacy. But I cannot plunge the country into war, so I have already exercised my veto."

CHAPTER V

LOVE AT SUNRISE

BILLY EVANS was giving a house party, a party of twelve that taxed the capacity of the mine superintendent's quarters. His sister was ostensibly hostess. So, of course, Arthur Hancock was there, quiet, hardworking, serious Arthur Hancock, whose devotion to Evangeline Evans was the romance of the valley. For two years he had paid her court in his own way, which was to keep himself in the background and to try to forestall her every wish. He was always unselfishly considerate of others, and with her he carried this quality to a climax. And she, well, who can read a woman's heart? All that Rosario knew, and if the truth be told, probably all the principals themselves knew, was that he had never quite been able to persuade her to leave her brother and keep house in Eden Valley.

Of course, Frances Coulters was there. If everything must have a motif, she was the motif of this gathering. A mass of golden hair, the brightest blue eyes that ever smiled a welcome, a determined little mouth and chin—determined when in repose but forever on the verge of laughter, such she was to Billy. Her other attributes must have been nearly enough perfect not to have spoiled the picture, for the impression she had made on his susceptible heart was the kind that comes to such a man but once in a

LOVE AT SUNRISE

lifetime. He simply wouldn't take no for an answer; he begged so hard for friendship and companionship where he had failed to win love that she hadn't had the heart to refuse him that solace. And she liked him and gave him a friendship so sweet and noble that it made his fate so much the harder to bear. Through it all he had to appear cheerful and happy. He well knew that if he ever broke in her presence, if she ever really saw and understood the suffering that lay back of his jests and light love making, she would end the situation forever.

With Frances came her father and mother, the official chaperones, and her sister. Dr. Hollington was invited with the Coulters. Had he not been generally regarded as the host's rival he would certainly have been included and Billy Evans was far too true a sport to have thought of leaving him out through any feeling of jealousy.

The Sanfords and the Whites were there, young married couples of whom Billy and Evangeline were fond. They were comparatively newcomers; the Sanfords had lived in Rosario less than a year, while the Whites had come in during the last few months, straight from their honeymoon.

Saturday afternoon was given over to an inspection of the mine. Once the guests were assembled they were taken deep into the earth, where miners with pick and shovel, with air compressors and dynamite, were following the easily distinguishable veins. The visitors were shown the endless chains that brought the rock to the surface, the conveyors that

THE INTERLOPERS

put it under the powerful stamps. They saw the resultant powder thrown into tanks, and had explained to them how cyanide of potassium is able to dissolve metallic gold. They wandered through the reduction plant, thrilled at the sight of virgin gold, watched some assays made for their benefit, and generally absorbed knowledge on the art of working low grade ore.

And they felt, more or less consciously, that at the heart of all this there was a real man. Fifty primates working underground, their bodies developed, their brains but little used, disclosed that Evans was more than their employer—he was their leader. On the surface as well everything showed the effects of a strong hand, sparingly used. Such a smooth running machine as the Mountain Lion Mine was a monument to the efficiency of Billy Evans.

An informal supper was served on the front porch. Cold meats and salads were on the side-board, and everyone helped himself or was waited on by her escort. The mine inspection had been hard work which had sharpened appetites at the expense of conversation. So it was a quiet meal, or would have been but for the host. He was as ever the life of the party.

When the sunset came, conversation lagged under the influence of the golden clouds and purpling hills. Not even a rustle of air could be heard as little by little there stole in the sounds of the mountains. A few minutes more and the stars were shining, for southwestern twilights are momentary. Then the

LOVE AT SUNRISE

Evanses led their guests into the living room, to a blazing fire and a cheerful warmth.

But the spell of the sunset, the call of the mountains, was upon them still. It developed that at less than an hour's ride lay a wonderful spot, a spot overlooking the Salton sea and the desert and the rocky hills. And the talk grew of getting up early and going there to see the sun rise out of the Colorado. Some would go; those who would not or could not urged the hesitating ones. The party finally arranged was Frances and Ruth Coulters and Evangeline Evans, Billy Evans, Dr. Hollington and Arthur Hancock. That disposed of, Sam Coulters became the target of attack.

"I hear your friends in Sacramento had an ace in the hole," said Evans.

"And the case ace at that," answered Coulters, with a grin.

"So, of course, you have quit. What is the next play, Sam?"

"I don't know."

"Which means you won't tell. All right. But one of these days I may find time hanging heavy on my hands, and bring down a bunch of my huskies to run all those Japanese out of Rosario."

"Could you keep them out after doing so?"

"Might, unless I thought of some other form of amusement. Perhaps I would change my mind when I got all those men down in the valley, and run off with Frances instead. She looks as though she needed a little mountain air."

THE INTERLOPERS

"But no mountaineer," from Frances.

"Then I will take Ruth."

"Nothing doing. I will never, never be second choice."

"Correct; it will have to be Frances. Would not life be lovely if I didn't have to make a date every time I wanted to see you? And we could have a real fight, too. The doctor would have a battery of bacteria tubes to defend you. How about it?"

But Robert did not respond. He wanted to but could not. His mind was on the morning's ride, although he was talking to Mrs. White about some recent New York plays. He was shocked, too, just a little, that anything so sacred should be treated as a joke. And if not ashamed, he was at least a bit disappointed in himself that he couldn't join in the spirit in which it was all meant. He knew that he'd always been more or less popular at home, that he usually had something interesting and appropriate to say. Yet here often, as tonight, his failure to take the cue had brought frivolity to an end. And he was big enough to assume the blame, instead of holding it against these Californians.

In the morning with the stars still shining and darkness out of doors the riders assembled. Evangeline and Frances wore their farm riding clothes, baggy, loose-fitting suits of khaki. Arthur and Robert had borrowed some trousers and leggings at the mine. Evans was dressed as he was the evening before. He made his apologies, while the girls brought in coffee and hot rolls. Some obscure

LOVE AT SUNRISE

trouble, which demanded his personal and immediate attention, had developed in one of his conveyors. Neither was Ruth going, either because she really had the headache she pleaded, or because she was too proud to be an odd member.

The expedition was not long in starting. Arthur, acting as guide, took the lead. There was little opportunity for conversation, the trail was too narrow and too steep. The riders had to trust everything to the superior eyesight of their mounts, as these picked their way among the boulders.

In order to avoid the brush, for awhile the trail followed the bottom of a dry ravine. It was a steep little cañon and very rough, for it had been cut by water which came only at intervals, but came then furiously determined to get down from the mountains. After half a mile the trail turned abruptly up one of the banks, from which with a short, steep, gasping ascent, the easier traveling of the mesa was reached. Here, except for desperate plunges in and out of washes, the contour of the cañon head was followed to the fork of the ridge. The side of this ridge was a mass of loose rocks, varying in size from pebble to house. Soft, rotten, weather-beaten, it was piled as steep as it could lie without slipping. Up this the horses toiled in long zig-zags. Often they would have to test a spot with their front feet; then would come an indescribable lurch, while the weight was being shifted so the hind legs could be brought to the same level. But they were all wise old animals, well used to every phase of mountain

THE INTERLOPERS

life. So it was that finally, after much hard work, though without danger or excitement, they all reached the top.

It was still dark. There was little the eye could see save the bare outlines of the surrounding hills. It was cold, with the still, dry cold of the summit that sucks the body's warmth. How clear were the stars, and how near they seemed, shining through the dustless air! The sky must be cloudless, for the little iridescent pin pricks were everywhere—everywhere except in the east. There was a stretch of sky against the horizon which was brighter than one would have thought, for all the stars within it were extinguished.

The dawn was coming, and as the minutes passed the stars became less distinct. The eye could not see the changing. In fact, in this whole wonderful panorama that was about to be unfolded, in the progression from stygian darkness to the most brilliant of natural lights there was not as much as a variation in shading or in color that could be detected at the time, that could be detected at all except by memory. A bright star shone in the east well above the sky line. A few moments later it was dimmed; the next time one looked for it it was gone, absorbed by the fast growing semicircle that held no stars.

The silhouettes of the surrounding hills began to show a bit of detail—a stray chapparel, perhaps, or a jagged pile of granite. To the west were the twinkling lights of Rosario, and of other and fur-

LOVE AT SUNRISE

ther settlements, separated from the watchers by great, black masses of hills. To the east, the far off mountains began to appear as mist, as the coming of the day added to the faint light of the stars. Now the general nature of the country could be distinguished; rough, rolling, intermittently descending hills to the west, to the east a precipitous broken decline of thousands upon thousands of feet to the level flow of the desert itself.

Something flat stretched away to the horizon, something that might have been the ocean, or a sea of fog, or a misty chaos; something that engulfed the great jagged fingers that ran out from the mountainous rock-pile. Something that exerted the spell of Circe upon the watchers on the ridge. But between lay the very gates of hell, an inverted pyramid, perhaps half a mile across, that even in this half light made one shudder at its frightfulness. And ever as more details were revealed the horror grew, the while there came to the horizon a long, thin line of wondrous pink.

With no warning there came the sunburst, brilliant rays of color shooting to the zenith. Range after range of rock hills were coming into view, the nearer ones in white and black, without intermediate shades; those farther away dimmer and dimmer until they merged into the horizon's clouds. One long, ragged shoulder ran across the eastern heavens, its skyline marking in glorious contrast the night and the day. By now the hell hole stood revealed, a

THE INTERLOPERS

circle of spurs dropping to abysmal depths. Some of these ribs were of huge brown rocks, devoid of earth or of life, for all the world as though poured out of a magic basket. Some were covered with the chips that had come from the disintegration of the granite, looking at a distance almost like sand, and offering refuge to an occasional stunted bush.

By this time, it might almost be said that daylight had come. There remained but to make what could be seen a little clearer and brighter. To the left five ranges of mountains, one above another, ran into the desert. The farthest was a blurred blue, the next a soft pink, while the centre one was sapphire. The nearest range was dull grey, the remaining one a brown. On the right new hills were coming up in the distance, soft, greyish-blue masses were resolving themselves either into hills or into clouds. The hell hole just below was more hideous than ever, and stronger grew the impression that beyond it lay others, in tiers and terraces to the foot of the hills. In spots, growing and merging, the level stretches became the brown, barren valley floor.

An incandescent line shows over the sand hills by the Colorado, it turns to a segment, to a great copper ball of fire. The pink band above the sun turns yellow; another day has begun. At first the change was slight. On all sides great rocky ridges, running here and there, oppressed with a feeling of nearness. In that wonderful air and light the eye had no conception of distance, the immediate hills gave no sug-

LOVE AT SUNRISE

gestion of having thickness, nor of being widely separated; they were like the painted scenes of the stage, rising one behind another. This impression spread rapidly as the sun rose to several times its own diameter, spread until immense mountains miles in length and thousands of feet in height looked like gigantic cardboards standing on edge.

Color came slowly to this scene, but came gorgeously and lavishly. Nothing could be added to the horrible grey of the valley just below, but the walls, especially the farther ones, turned to a glorious purple, a promise of beauty beyond. A kaleidoscope of color ran riot; the hill that at one moment was pink would turn red or yellow or blue with the changing moods of the heavens. The deep saffron of the distant Salton sea alone was constant, while the rocks, the hills, the mountains, the sky and all outdoors took on a boldness of outline and a brilliancy of tone no human artist would dare adopt.

Hollington finally broke the silence. "I suppose you have seen all of this before?" he said to Frances. The others had moved to a boulder a few hundred feet away.

"I've been here a number of times," replied Frances, "but one could never see it all."

"To me it's a symbol of life. There is a parallel between the trail we came up this morning and the years I have spent in training and study. The top of that ridge represents attainment. I had become a fairly successful doctor, but I was still in the dark.

THE INTERLOPERS

Ignorantly so, too, for I thought the light of the stars was the light of life. And then I met you. What is that but the faint light that dimmed the stars, the light that showed what a greater thing there is in life than mere success? I could no more tell you, Frances, when I began to love you, than I could point to that marvelous scene below us, and tell you at what moment in the past hour it ceased to be dark and became light. My love for you has changed me no less than the sun has changed this picture. Frances, I want to live for you. I want to have you with me always. Not even such a wonder as we have just seen could mean anything to me unless you stood beside me to share it. Nothing I could accomplish would be worth while unless it were being done for you. What a dream it would be to have a home, the home that you could make for me; to spend all my time in doing things for you, in trying to make you happy—and perhaps when everything went wrong, to go to you for just the touch of sympathy that would make all bright and cheerful once more. I love you. Is there any chance, Frances, that you—that you—that you could ever care enough for me to make this dream come true?"

"Robert, I do care for you—more than for anyone—more than I have ever cared for anyone. But I have never thought of such things as this. Give me a little time Robert. Just as soon as I know, it cannot be long, I will tell you."

"Here come Evangeline and Arthur. Will you look at their faces? We do not seem to be the only

LOVE AT SUNRISE

ones who were carried away by the glories of this sunrise. Well, we are to congratulate you?" she continued, as the others came into earshot.

"You certainly are," replied Arthur.

There was a suspicious degree of warmth in the kiss that Frances gave Evangeline, in the handclasp that Robert gave them both.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROSARIO SCHOOL

THERE are almost as many kinds of teachers as there are kinds of people, so it would open too wide a field of philosophy to trace the chain of events that placed Miss Tibbetts in the Rosario school. Perhaps the seed might be found in the good old days when the ambition of every big boy was to whip the schoolmaster, an ambition that was most effectively checked by the appointment of some nice young lady, to whom he made love instead. Perhaps it lay in the passing of the big boys and the fights, or in the custom of normal graduates to begin their careers in the country. In any event, there was a building in Eden Valley dedicated to education, so of course there had to be a teacher.

Miss Tibbetts was a product of the modern system. She was fairly well educated herself, and trained in the most scientific way of imparting knowledge. She owned a highly ornate certificate setting forth her qualifications as her teachers saw them, but saying nothing of her knowledge of human nature nor of her ability to meet conditions not dealt with in the text books.

In the first place she was unsophisticated. That is a dangerous word, for we are all unsophisticated, from the convent girl to him who imagines himself a man of the world. The average young girl of

THE ROSARIO SCHOOL

today knows so much more than did grandmothers when of the same age that she regards her ancestors as decidedly unsophisticated. And her married sister, having listened to many excuses and tales of high life, similarly regards the younger woman. Beyond them is the good, honest, every-day man, next the man who tries to distinguish between sport and real vice. Further we need not go. But the answer could be found only in the worst person in the world, and his brain would be so befuddled that his opinions would be of no value.

Whatever you may think of the others, and whatever standard you may adopt, you will have to grant that Miss Tibbetts was not sophisticated. The eldest child of a widow, her life as far back as she could remember had meant work. Congenial and not too hard, it had demanded her time without checking her development. Household duties in a home of refinement, and study in high school and normal, left little time for leisure. The years that in other girls developed the instinct for mating she had devoted with a singleness of purpose to preparing herself for her profession.

The flux from this crucible was an altogether charming little virgin, beloved by the grown ups for her personality and by the children for her unfailing sweetness. She couldn't control her classes, she didn't pretend to. She followed the precepts of her training doggedly, almost mechanically. The while, she won her scholars with tact and real affection,

THE INTERLOPERS

and accomplished more than the sternest of disciplinarians could have done.

Into the school, when the first rush of the winter work was over, came three Japanese. Half men and half boys they were, ambitious to learn the western ways, yet purely oriental in every habit of thought. It's not so many years since our own forbears went to school after they were almost grown. But the system, which at that time was fitted to cope with them, has undergone a process of evolution. So have the scholars, as well as the ideals and the methods. If such an anachronism as the big boy of old were to enter a graded grammar school today he would throw the entire machinery out of tune, though undoubtedly he would be cared for and taught.

Miss Tibbets at first found a delight in her new pupils. They were industrious and eager to learn beyond any previous experience of hers. In short they were her disciples. The progress made by the fully matured brain under these circumstances completely overshadowed that of even the brightest of the normal, fun loving children. In that side of their nature these aliens reflected her own struggles and successes, and so found a ready sympathy. And there was her satisfaction, too, for her professional side was flattered by their proficiency. So it was that with growing mutual esteem they learned and taught.

But all males are vicious, except perhaps at those two extremes of life when weakness makes a neces-

THE ROSARIO SCHOOL

sity of virtue. Of the viciousness of the small boy Miss Tibbetts had had much experience, theoretically. She had encountered this trait frequently under many names in her text books and in her lectures. If she could not always subdue it, and there were tears on her pillow to witness occasional failures, at least it was something of which she had an understanding. If she couldn't fathom the mental process that made small boys fight, and fidget, and do one naughty thing after another, she did accept it as a fact that their actions followed their impulses without a conscious break, and she also accepted the fact that their impulses were not always of the highest order.

The viciousness of the big boys of the days of the pedagogues she would have learned to accept in much the same way, had it come into her life. After all, it's a long cry from the days of signiory, or of the Italian nobles. And the restraints of civilization, which is essentially recognition of the rights of the weaker, have so permeated the human race that the roughest lumber-jack or unskilled laborer has come within its influence to a degree that would astonish him if it were brought to his notice.

While there are many things these big boys would have done which you and I, with greater advantages, would avoid, yet there are things they would not do. We all have a limit beyond which we will not transgress, a limit which varies far more with epochs of history than with individual consciences. The big boy has a good deal of the small boy left in him,

THE INTERLOPERS

and a good deal of the man is there, and, however high or low his standard may be, he is almost certainly a militant idealist. Miss Tibbetts would have handled him with tact, with an appeal to his chivalry, with an instinctive recognition of his weaknesses and of his strength, and she would have been successful because he represented the same state of race development that she herself did.

Hogo and Watsa and Nanga came to the Rosario school with traditions older by centuries than those of the other scholars. They came to learn, and were prepared to and did accept countless of the western ways because of their wish to become Americanized. But without disloyalty to their old ideals. Up to a certain point the workings of the human mind are mechanical and can no more be changed than the color of the skin, the slant of the eyes, or the shape of the skull.

Little Miss Tibbetts' first troubles came when her three Asiatics tried to take part in the school games. They knew nothing of baseball, which, at the time, was undergoing one of its popular revivals among the small boys of Rosario. But Hogo's older brother, who was working on the old Warner place, had once been a professional baseball player. He explained the sport to his three compatriots and practiced throwing, catching and batting with them, until one day they presented themselves ready to join in the great national game. Their desire for knowledge went far beyond books, it included every phase of American life.

THE ROSARIO SCHOOL

"Red," alias Ralph Watson, and "Slats," whose fond parents had expected him to be called Stephen Ruggles, were the two who usually chose sides. With officious ceremonies Red would toss a bat to Slats, who with his right hand would catch it somewhere near the centre. Then Red's little fist would close just above the other's, which in turn would slip above his. And so on, the winner being the one who last held the bat securely enough to swing it over his head. After that the choosing of sides began. In their imagination the game was not played between teams of half a dozen small boys to a side, on an old school lot, while waiting for the bell to ring. On the contrary the players were all grown men and famous experts, a vast concourse of people watched them, people who expected and received all the pomp and circumstance due to the king of sports. The little dreamers did the best they could, where the proper swagger was more important than the proper play.

Miss Tibbetts was pleased one morning to find Hogo and his friends playing in this game. She was surprised the next day that the children had given up their baseball and were playing prisoner's base. She called Red into the school house to find out what lay behind it all. But the interview was not very satisfactory. The facts were that the Japanese had been as serious about the game as about everything else. Red would never have admitted that he and his fellows were afraid to play because the newcomers hit too hard and threw too fast, and he never

THE INTERLOPERS

could have explained how reality had shattered the make-believe.

Prisoner's base, or at least the California variety, consists of a number of players divided into two sides. Two parallel lines some twenty yards apart represent the bases. And rough circles drawn in the sand are prison walls. The player who leaves his base becomes the prey of any opposing player who has left his own subsequently. If captured, a prisoner may be released by being tagged by any one of his own team. Of course, the game demands an umpire. And equally, of course, in a small school it is habitually played without one.

The first day after baseball was abandoned the Japanese watched the children, the second day they said they would play. Hogo and Nanga were accepted, Watsa was in the schoolhouse studying. As had happened before, the small tots were outclassed. The two big boys, though on opposite sides, made no effort to catch each other, but filled the prison with the little children, who had no chance against them.

Red Watson decided that since Nanga would not catch Hogo, he must do so himself. So he made it a point to always leave his base just after Hogo came out, and always to run home as soon as Hogo did. Using Nanga for a stalking horse, Red waited his opportunity, and when it came he darted out and tagged Hogo fairly and squarely. What a shout went up, what clapping of hands and dancing! How they did tease Hogo. Ridicule is the one thing that

THE ROSARIO SCHOOL

the Japanese cannot endure. So he lied, claiming and insisting that he had left the base after Red, and refusing point blank to go to prison. Nanga sustained him, whereupon the game broke up in a fierce quarrel.

The Anglo-Saxon has been taught that truth is a virtue, the Oriental that it is a folly. Ralph Watson, half sobbing with anger, half blind with hatred, revolving in his mind wild schemes for getting even, could not have been persuaded that he was not the victim of an injustice. Child-like, he exaggerated the importance of it all. But the principle involved was as firm in his twelve-year-old mind as a thousand years of breeding and thinking and living could plant it. A little self-conscious, perhaps, but behind him twice several thousand years to justify himself, Hogo could not any more easily understand Red's feelings than Red could justify Hogo's actions.

Miss Tibbetts smoothed over the matter. She liked Red, admired him for his sturdy courage, his devotion to principle, and his native honesty. Moreover, he was right. Her every instinct told her that lying was wrong. Neither her breeding nor her profession made it possible for her to admit of any other philosophy, or to see that the whole trouble was really the contact of two world-old and irreconcilable developments. She persuaded the Japanese to give up trying to take part in the school games, and coaxed Red and his associates to resume friendly relations.

So Watson and Nanga once more took up their

THE INTERLOPERS

dicker for the wild pigeon eggs. Red had been an ardent collector for years. His eggs were properly drilled and carefully blown. His orderly care of them was in such contrast to his regular habits that it was at once his mother's pride and her despair. For Red was a very human youngster. Nanga had a pair of wild pigeon eggs, something which young Watson had long wanted, as almost the only native bird not on his list. He had prepared these eggs for Nanga, then offered their equivalent and more from his trading stock. Nanga was not a collector, so Red had to unearth some of his other treasures. Proposals and counter offers followed, negotiations worthy of a larger business deal. When at last an agreement was reached, Red gave up his pocket knife, seven glass marbles and his agate; his cherished agate that had won for him the reputation of being the school's best player. Nanga put all these things in his pocket and promised to bring the eggs with him in the morning.

But he did not do so. He gave back the seven marbles and the knife and told how he had lost the agate before he had reached home. There he had found a letter offering him money, real money, for those pigeon eggs, and so, of course, he had sold them.

Red went at once to Miss Tibbetts, but what could she do? He told his father about it in the evening. Mr. Watson could not think of anything better to advise his son than to have nothing more to do with Nanga and his friends. And this advice Red fol-

THE ROSARIO SCHOOL

lowed, literally and vindictively. He was so popular among his fellows, and made such a strong appeal when he preached his feud, that not a boy over ten would speak to one of those Japanese or recognize his existence.

Red thoroughly enjoyed it, and felt repaid for the lost stone. Nanga was hurt. He could not reason against his own traditions, nor could his fellow countrymen help him when he laid his troubles before them. Their theory of life did not include the western doctrine that a promise once given must be carried out, a contract once entered into must be fulfilled. If this ideal were universally lived up to in the western world the Japanese would have accepted it. But the distinction between an ideal that is so disregarded and the more material scheme of life which does not include such an ideal is a very fine one. Too much so, in fact, for Nanga and his friends, who could see in the incident itself and in its consequences nothing but race prejudice. And being proud and sensitive they resented it, and more bitterly because of their impotence.

Miss Tibbetts did not try to smooth over this disagreement. She remained friendly with both sides, while recognizing their hostility to each other. The school discipline she succeeded in maintaining to the extent that there were no outbreaks during study or recitation hours. Her one concession was to remove the Japanese to the extreme rear, not far from the larger girls.

Then came the trouble that involved the parents,

THE INTERLOPERS

the trustees, and the whole valley. Again it was not a question of wrong on one side or of right on the other. Logic was entirely on the side of the Japanese, race prejudice and instinct against them.

Here were three boys, not especially congenial among themselves. They were cut off from intercourse with the other boys of the school through a series of incidents regarding which they held themselves blameless. Miss Tibbetts was kind to them, but she was their teacher and could not meet them on any other basis. The boys' own position in life was on a parity with the other people in this valley, where social caste was unknown. There were people in Rosario, people like the Packhards and the Coulters, who might be above recognizing them. On the other hand, knowing as they did their own positions at home, and the respect generally accorded to their families, they considered themselves at least the equals of nearly all the Rosarians and the superiors of most of them. And as to race, why, they were proud of the blood that was in them. They had always been taught in their isolation that the Japanese were by far the greatest of humanity, and they could point to many facts to prove it. They did not believe that the question of blood superiority was involved at all, or if it were it was all in their favor.

They knew that these Americans held ideas on the subject of womankind very different from their own. They had no sympathy with these strange notions; reason and hygiene were both against them. Never-

THE ROSARIO SCHOOL

theless, they understood them perfectly and willingly accepted them. On that statement of facts, craving society and companionship, it was only natural that they should mix a little with the older girls in the school, and endeavor in a pleasant way to become acquainted with them.

But when little Jennie Graham came in one evening and told incidentally how Watsa had walked home with her, carrying her books, her parents froze stiff in their chairs. She prattled on about how surprisingly nice Watsa was; she had never believed that those Japanese were nice at all, from what the other boys had told her. Fulton Graham caught his wife's eye; nothing was said to Jennie at the time, but as soon as she left the room the mother's eyes filled with tears.

We all flatter ourselves that we are children of reason, but let reason and instinct conflict! Perhaps a keen logician could prove to Sarah Graham that there was no reason why Watsa should not be attentive to her daughter, just as children are to each other. Perhaps he might prove it, but never could he persuade her to let Jennie continue the acquaintance. Her first words showed how her mother's mind went to the kernel of the situation.

"Fulton, what is the quickest way to stop this?"

"I think we had best go to Miss Tibbetts and talk it over with her."

They found the teacher at the home of the Scotts, where she boarded. Mrs. Scott answered their ring, and ushered them into the sitting room. Donald

THE INTERLOPERS

was smoking his old pipe and reading the paper. Six days a week, from sun up till dark, he worked, and worked hard. In fact, everything he did, he did hard. Still he found time to keep up with what went on in the world, to be the leading supporter of his church, and to serve as chairman of the school trustees. Miss Tibbetts rose from the papers she was marking, to join Scott in shaking hands with the Grahams and finding seats for them.

"We've come to see you about Jennie," said Graham. "We learned tonight that one of your Japanese students has become acquainted with her, and we want it stopped."

"Why, what has he done? I'm so sorry, for I was just thinking how nice it was for those poor boys to know some of the older girls."

"Then you're to blame for this," broke in Bessie.

"To blame? Tell me what is the trouble?" Miss Tibbetts asked.

"The trouble?" Bessie Graham could hardly contain herself. "Why, I told you, Watsa as you call him, walked home with Jennie, and has tried to make friends with her at school."

"Do you object to that?"

Fulton Graham was on his feet, but Donald Scott forestalled him, and by sheer quiet strength took control of the situation.

"Everybody is right, so let's not quarrel. Dorothy is the schoolteacher. You must see that all who go to her school are equals there, that it would be wrong for her to treat them any other way. She

THE ROSARIO SCHOOL

has told me a great many times of her troubles with the Japanese, and I think that she deserves the highest praise for her efforts to help them. You Grahams are right, of course. No one will question a parent's privilege to choose the daughter's associates. As to telling you why they object, Dorothy, I don't believe they can. But I understand, and so would you, if you were thinking entirely of Jennie, and not of the school as a whole."

"Mrs. Graham, I can't go to those boys and tell them they must not speak to any of the girls, I just cannot do it."

"You'll have to stop it some way, Dorothy," said Mrs. Scott. "All the mothers will feel the same way. I'm enough of a mother to you to know how I'd feel if Watsa should bring you home. Can't you attend to this for her, Donald? It's really something for the trustees to handle."

"I've given the matter a good deal of thought," said Donald. "I'll call a special meeting of the board. If the others agree, which I'm sure they will, we'll pass a resolution excluding Japanese from the school. I dislike doing this for many reasons. But we had one of the best schools in the country before these Japs came. It's wholly against our feelings and our interests that they are forced upon us and I see no sense or justice in it. If this is unfair to them I'm sorry. Under the circumstances nothing better can be done."

CHAPTER VII

ROBERT HOLLINGTON'S IDEALS

HOLLINGTON was becoming very fond of shooting. He had taken to the sport at first because it offered the exercise and relaxation which he needed. Clem Harding was guide and teacher until the doctor became proficient. At least once every week during the season these two drove to the foothills for quail, to the open fields for dove, or to the lake if they were out for duck. In the summer they found rabbits among the cactus, or bass in the reservoir. And in the spring they often spent a night camping in the mountains, trapping or studying bird life, or just being out of doors for its own sake. These expeditions were subject to many interruptions and cancellations, for a doctor's call to duty is paramount. Nevertheless, they went on over a long period of time with somewhat surprising regularity. And this because the doctor, having decided that his health required them, had endowed them with the same importance as any other work.

Quail is king in southern California. Given cover not quite waist high and birds that know what shooting means, the man who brings home a fair bag has outguessed a little clever brain controlling a big fighting heart. "The smartest and gamiest birds alive," Clem Harding used to say. Their home is in the sage and the cactus, on cañon side and on

ROBERT HOLLINGTON'S IDEALS

mesa. From the normally dry, sand-covered river beds the walls rise to the level of the table-land, the land that was there aeons ago, before the water had cut the immense furrows. On one side, perhaps the rise is abrupt, on the other, the shifting of the river bed may have left a gradual slope even miles in width. The quail is not fond of flying. So it's on the gentle slopes, on those which he can travel afoot, that he makes his home. He likes the hills, too, where the yellow grass is soft underfoot, where he can hide in the chapparal, or rest in the sumach, or seek refuge in the chollas. He likes to hunt his water holes early in the morning, to work his way upwards leisurely, scratching and feeding on the way, to spend the warm hours in the cooling breeze near the top.

Hollington found several qualities were necessary to a successful quail hunter. First of all was ability to find the birds. Over wide areas of sage hills, apparently all more or less alike, the novice might stumble unsuccessfully for hours, might not see a bird all day. And once the flock was flushed and a few shots fired into it, it would be lost to a beginner. But the old quail hunter would follow so fast on the heels of the frightened birds, would mark so carefully when they lit, and would know so well what they were going to do, that he would have them at his mercy, often for an hour or more at a time.

Dr. Hollington learned that he must pick individual birds when the barren hillside, with an angry, vicious, nerve-racking burr, began to vomit little blue

THE INTERLOPERS

streaks. He learned to be steady when a single bird noisily broke cover at his very feet; he learned to lead his target properly, to shoot to kill the quail, not merely to drop it, and above all to mark carefully where it fell so that he could find it. He became familiar with the marvelous hiding qualities of his quarry, whether wounded or not, of the courage and patience with which it could lie still until he almost stepped on it, often to make a dash for safety just after he had passed. He learned the intimate habits of the bird, why for instance it liked to keep a ditch between itself and him, why it maneuvered to prevent him from getting up wind, why it was that it usually ran up the hills and flew down them. Clem Harding was a master of the more obscure traits of the quail. He taught Hollington to read meaning into tracks and scratches on the hillside, and even to imitate the penetrating whistle. Or if they found signs about a water hole, the old westerner taught him how to tell the age of those signs, and the probable direction which the birds had taken.

So passed many a day. Hollington, thoroughly interested, absorbed the hunter's lore. There was more than sport and recreation to be had out of this, more than a growing skill and an increasing bag. There was contact with the spirit of the great southwest. It is hardly to be expected that even by intimate association such as this could a man of Clem Harding's type affect a character such as Hollington's. But it is natural to suppose, and as a matter

ROBERT HOLLINGTON'S IDEALS

of fact it really did happen that the easterner grew better to understand the western point of view, to sympathize with it, and to admire it.

Except for these outdoor sports, and except too for frequent visits to the Coulters, Hollington's time was taken up by his profession. Of course, he was a social favorite in a general way. But that phase of life was of minor importance in this valley of farmers. A dance once a month, perhaps, and an invitation to supper about as often, was the limit of their gaiety. There was one other recreation in which Hollington did indulge himself, and that was his association with the new Japanese settlers.

They first won his doctor's heart by fortitude when in pain, and by their care in following instructions. They were model patients, and flattering ones as well. When they found that he alone of all the white men in the valley took an interest in them, and that they could bring their troubles to him, they displayed affection and appreciation.

Saishoto took the lead in this. He had been in the ambulance corps with the forces that drove the Germans out of China. He was an observant person, with an insatiable curiosity to understand the reasons that lay back of what he saw. His command of English was sufficient to enable him to make himself understood, so an intimacy began, based on discussions of the Japanese military methods of handling medical problems.

From there it was not long before Saishoto spoke of his home in Japan, of the many pretty little cus-

THE INTERLOPERS

toms of his people, of the intimate details of their lives. Told sympathetically and listened to in the same way, these were wonderfully interesting stories.

There were the sisters, Satsuko and Kotingo, daughters of a small village merchant. Satsuko was the elder, a shy, timid little thing. Her marriage to Saishoto had been arranged between her father and his at a series of meetings in the mountains back of Nakimura. Saishoto told Hollington of the negotiations, of the outcome when the long drawn out subtleties of Oriental trading had at last been satisfied. Saishoto read a sweet little letter from Satsuko, telling him just when she was coming down to the coast and all her plans. Then came the word that she had reached Tokio, and had been so frightened that she had gone straight back to her home, from which neither entreaties nor threats could make her stir again.

It was a hard blow to Saishoto. Hollington cheered him as best he could, devoting more time to the task than he could really afford. He was sorry for this poor lonely boy, thrown among unsympathetic countrymen and hostile strangers. In no way was any blame to be attached to him for conditions in Rosario. When Saishoto left the army he had been ordered to emigrate and to report to Hanba in San Diego. The reasons for such orders were not imparted to him. His discipline and his patriotism had been so highly developed that he obeyed these instructions without question, without

ROBERT HOLLINGTON'S IDEALS

ever knowing or really trying to learn from what source they had emanated. So when Hanba told him to proceed to Eden Valley, and to take charge of the work on the Kraemer place, he did so as a matter of course. Perhaps it was by accident, perhaps through design, that he was there thrown in with men from Nagasaki. In either event, it was not long before Hollington was the best if not the only friend Saishoto had in this foreign land to which he had come.

There were others, too, who turned to Hollington. It was he who explained the intricacies of the water distribution, and compelled the yellow men to shut down when their allotment was exhausted. It was he to whom a merchant would apply when a bill was disputed, or a tax collector when some charge could not or would not be understood, or a tree inspector who was authorized to compel everyone to join in community spraying.

It was an anomaly, a man with such a bringing up as Hollington had had, doing work of this kind. He would have rebelled at the idea had it ever been presented to him in its entity. But the situation had evolved easily and naturally from those two never to be forgotten days spent with Dr. Alling.

One of the first experiences that came as a result of the task Hollington had assumed was his encounter with Alfred Carroll. Hollington had dropped into the parsonage for a little chat with Irving Stanwood, in the course of which he outlined to the minister something of the plans he had made

THE INTERLOPERS

for himself. The latter was tolerant, as age is apt to be tolerant of the enthusiasm of youth.

"It's all very pretty and does you credit. I once had ambitions myself to be a power for good. I hope you'll never find, as I have done, that the world is too big, too settled in its ways, to be much affected by any one person. It's so unresponsive that I gradually began to drift as time ran on. Now I try to do my duty as it comes to me, no matter how hard or distasteful it may be, but I have long ceased to emulate Don Quixote, which is about what you are doing."

"I wonder if Dr. Alling did?"

"Dr. Alling, my dear sir, was an exceptional man, occupying an exceptional position. I don't believe that he ever consciously planned his life to be what it is; he, too, drifted. I wonder what he would have done with Carroll's case."

"Who's Carroll?"

"He lives in a little shack on the edge of the settlement next to Baker. I always had supposed he lived alone. I had been in to see him several times before I learned that there were two small children in the house, a boy less than two years old and a girl of about four. As far as anyone knows these babies never leave the house.

"Carroll's history is not well known. His wife left him a few months ago, ran off with another man. From all accounts it has affected Carroll's mind to a certain extent; not enough, however, to warrant taking the children from him. In fact it's

ROBERT HOLLINGTON'S IDEALS

on that subject that he is morbid. He is possessed of a horror that sometime his wife will steal them. So all day long, while he is working, he keeps them under lock and key. At other times he is with them, but never out of doors.

"He came into Rosario after he had been deserted, slipped in quietly without a word to anyone. He has not made a single friend here, for he rebuffs everyone who tries to speak to him. My own effort to remonstrate with him was too unpleasant for words. It happened only yesterday, so you see I'm rather full of the subject."

"I'm going to see that man the first thing tomorrow," said Hollington.

True to his word, he went over to Carroll's. There he found a man plowing a hayfield. The driver stopped his team at Hollington's approach.

"Is your name Carroll?" asked the latter.

"What is it to you?" Suspicion lurked behind two very pale blue eyes, hostility showed in every feature of a wan, gaunt face, and obstinacy in a mouth whose lips were so small as to be shapeless.

"I want to see your children."

"Well, you are not going to. Get up!"

"Wait a moment." Something was there that made Carroll stop in spite of himself. "You've no right to bring them up the way you are doing——"

"Say," Carroll climbed down from his seat and walked quite close to Robert. "Do you think I am going to let a kid like you, a dressed up dude with

THE INTERLOPERS

a doll face, come here and tell me what to do? You run on back to the road and go home."

"Do you know what will happen to children who are brought up without fresh air and sunshine?"

"I don't know and I——"

"I do know because I have seen. You have never been through the Ghetto or seen the baby ward of a New York hospital. I have. If you do not treat yours differently——"

"They're mine, aren't they? You can't tell me how to treat them."

"Perhaps not, but I can and will tell you what will happen to them. They will not develop, either in body or mind——"

"How did you learn so much?"

"By ten years of hard work."

"You go back to my wife——"

"I've never even heard of her."

"Of course not. Tell her——"

"You're afraid you will lose those children, and you're very apt to do so, but not in the way you think. I'm a doctor. Robert Hollington is my name. I've come into this valley to live. I couldn't possibly be an emissary from your wife. She has nothing to offer that is worth as much to me as my home and practice here. It isn't as though I came from out of town."

"What do you want?" Hollington's steady insistence was putting Carroll on the defensive.

"I want to see your children, with you, find out what is ahead of them, and tell you; that is all."

ROBERT HOLLINGTON'S IDEALS

Carroll gave in, and the upshot of another half hour of argument was a flagpole by Mrs. McClure's home. If any hostile movement was suspected, she was to pull up a piece of red bunting. Every morning Carroll took the two youngsters to her, every evening he brought them back. All day long he worked, his eyes seldom off from that pole, while two children played in the sunshine, taking on health and color. Mrs. McClure collected a few dollars a month, but her real reward for the love she gave was to see the rosy cheeks and the happy, smiling faces of her wards.

When Hollington reported his success to Irving Stanwood, the latter was somewhat astonished. He threw up his hands, half in earnest:—

“Young man, you're lost. With so signal a triumph behind you, you'll be neither afraid of nor discouraged by anything. I kept to myself what Carroll said to me when I tried to persuade him that he was doing a wicked thing. I did so because I thought you might as well learn now as any time that there have been no crusaders for seven hundred years. I am going right on keeping it to myself, too, for it is one of the things we of the cloth have to listen to, but do not like to remember.”

Hollington found people usually more than glad of his advice, for he gave it sparingly, only when conditions were so bad that he knew that unless they were altered there were apt to be serious consequences. For instance, there was Teresa Martinez. She had married at seventeen and started house-

THE INTERLOPERS

keeping in the old adobe. That was an abandoned relic of the days before the Americans came.

Pablo Martinez was not a good provider, so poor little Teresa had had many trials. She had once been pretty, with the dark coppery beauty of the half breed. Ten years of a married life like hers, and eight children, had taken all but a shadow of her good looks.

Hollington had answered a call to her house. He found her cleaning away the noon meal which had been served on a home-made table covered with linoleum.

Robert watched her empty the dishes upon the table, scraping from them whatever food had been left. She then took a damp cloth, with which she wiped the top of the table, scraping everything upon the earthen floor. The last step in this remarkable housekeeping was to open the door to a flock of chickens that rushed in, accompanied by three or four half grown pigs. With more amusement than he could well conceal, he introduced the lady of the house to the advantages of a garbage pail. Then, because there was sickness in the house he preached cleanliness to a willing listener, who never before had known that such a thing existed, and so strong an appeal did he make that it was fully a week before this daughter of the south relapsed into her easy-going habits.

Episodes of this sort, half humorous and half pathetic, while rare, were sprinkled through his days

ROBERT HOLLINGTON'S IDEALS

with far greater frequency than such strenuous contests as the one with Carroll.

One of the pleasantest of all these extra-medical experiences was the climax of Saishoto's marital plans. One day the doctor was in his office alone, when an excited native of Japan was ushered in to him. Saishoto was so bubbling over to tell the good news that it was some little time before he could make himself understood. He produced a picture, and finally succeeded in explaining that it was of Kotingo, that her father and his had finally reached an agreement, that she had started for America, and by this time must actually be on the broad Pacific. He was to meet her in San Francisco in less than two weeks, where they were to be married before the authorities would allow her to land.

The doctor was greatly interested. There were a number of other women in the camps, but Kotingo was the first of the famous picture brides. His vanity was touched, too, when he learned that Saishoto had brought the news to him before telling it to anyone, even to his compatriots.

In spite of his relaxations and outside interests, Robert's life consisted principally of hard work. About this time he felt that his growing practice required the purchase of a small automobile. Its possession merely extended the area over which he was subject to call, leaving him busier than ever. His income was not large, for money was scarce in the days after the freeze. But he was happy and contented in his work, in his play, and in his association with Frances. (93)

CHAPTER VIII

GOSSIP AND COURTSHIP

MRS. CLARK, Mrs. Bates, and Mrs. Hastings sat in the parlor of the Clark cottage. In their laps were bundles of sewing, of stockings to be darned and shirts to be mended. The houses of the three were not far apart, so they often spent an afternoon in each other's company.

Their conversation was largely personal, present company carefully excluded. Since their minds did not run to such things as crops, or baseball, or politics, or war, or like matters of general interest, there was not much else they could discuss. And as all were inveterate talkers, they gossiped; what else could they do?

Mrs. Bates had just seen Miss Giddings. Miss Giddings had received a letter from Mrs. Outcalt in San Diego, a letter that told among other things about the Kraemers and the Warners. Jeanette was selling ribbons in a dry goods store, working long hours for six dollars a week. Her father was conductor on a street car, her brother Deland was driving a delivery wagon for a wholesale grocer and studying nights to fit himself for a position in the office. They had a little bungalow up on the hill, with the Kraemers still as neighbors. As a temporary condition the situation was not one of great hardship, for by close management they fed and

GOSSIP AND COURTSHIP

clothed and sheltered themselves. But if sickness came, or any misfortune! And Harry Warner was getting along in years, and could make no provision for the future.

"I always did know that Harry was too weak," said Mrs. Clark. "He's so nice that no one likes to criticize him, and yet he's really to blame for all this trouble we're having. How do you think he could ever have believed or trusted Butler?"

"He's paying for it now, he and that poor little wife," said Mrs. Bates. "Yes, and all the rest of us, too. Did you know that they have dropped those Japanese boys from the school?"

"Dorothy Tibbetts never did handle them right. She made friends with them, and actually forced the other children to play with them, just as long as she could."

"She's too weak to be a teacher," said Mrs. Hastings. "Why, do you remember how she let Sadie McClure talk back to her? It was the scandal of the valley. If any child had acted like that toward me—well, she would not have done so twice."

"It's wonderful how Sadie has improved. Once she was the worst little devil I've ever known. Now she's getting marks at school that make her mother proud, and is even cultivating manners—manners, think of that. What in the world did come over that child?"

"She filled Mr. Hastings' rain gauge with water," said his wife. "He never will forgive her for it. That same day she stretched a string across the walk

THE INTERLOPERS .

and twice knocked off the minister's silk hat, threw a heated coin to some gypsies, and sprained her ankle sliding down from the roof of the shed."

"Miss Tibbetts is too easy-going with everyone. When I was a child teachers knew how to make us do the things we should. She tries to be such a dainty little thing, and to give herself such an air of being a perfect lady."

"I know exactly what you mean," said Mrs. Clark. "And yet I can't help liking the girl. She'll probably marry one of these days and make someone a good wife, but she'll never make a teacher."

"Have Evangeline and Arthur told when they are to be married?" asked Mrs. Bates. "Was'nt his patience marvelous? There's something thoroughly nice about Arthur, but I suppose he'll never get anywhere in the world. And even that kindness of disposition might grow colorless if you had it around all the time."

"By the way," she continued, "I drove across the valley yesterday to take some wine jelly to little Jennie Graham. Do you know, that poor child is really sick; she has the worst case of grippe I've ever seen. That visit to her and the drive itself depressed me. I just can't get used to seeing Rosario without its large orange trees. Nothing but stumps for miles and miles. Have you noticed how nicely ours are being covered with leaves? They look so much like young trees that I often find myself thinking of the days when I first came here."

"They say," Mrs. Hastings remarked, "that Mr.

GOSSIP AND COURTSHIP

Graham has let his place run down so that even the weeds have not been plowed in."

"That's partly true. When I was there yesterday he was trying to work them under. That black adobe of his turned hard before he had gone over half the grove. Clark says that Mr. Graham's land is the most difficult in Rosario to work. It's so mushy and sticky after a rain that it is sometimes a week before he can put a team into the orchard. Then it turns over beautifully for three or four days; after that it becomes like stone. You know the old saying, 'three days from mud to brick.' That is particularly true with Mr. Graham."

"What are they doing for Jennie?" asked Mrs. Bates.

"Oh, Dr. Hollington is taking care of her; he's splendid with children."

"He's a remarkably fine doctor," added Mrs. Hastings. "We have been unusually fortunate, both in him and in Dr. Alling. It's curious how much alike they are under the surface, those two men who apparently have not a trait in common. Think what a jollier Alling was, and what a good mixer."

"In his heart Hollington is just as much interested in us," Mrs. Clark was perhaps unconscious of the fact that ability to take a real interest in the affairs of others is the basis of personal popularity. "No one seems to like him the less because he's so bashful."

"I used to imagine that he thought himself a little better than the rest of us," said Mrs. Bates, "and

THE INTERLOPERS

that he wanted to show it. But it really isn't that at all. It's only that he was brought up differently."

"There's something about him," said Mrs. Hastings, "that makes you glad to have him around. It may be his face; he is the best looking man I've ever seen. Or it may be his clothes; they're so neat and surely seem to belong to him. But what I really think it is, is the feeling of security you have when you are with him. You know that he is not going to do or say anything that will make you uncomfortable."

"What I like best about him," continued Mrs. Bates, "is that he is such an easy person to talk to, for he always understands what you are trying to say. If he doesn't agree with you he's not going to pretend to; at the same time you feel that he has given your ideas full consideration."

"He's clever," was Mrs. Clark's opinion. "He came here, a stranger to our conditions, and yet has been able to show us where they might be improved. His judgment is not infallible, of course, for so many of our problems have been worked out in bitter practice, not just thought out theoretically. He's always willing to give help, too, and that help isn't limited to advice. It seems as though every day or two comes to me some new story of his kindheartedness."

"Did you ever hear what Clem Harding said of him?" asked Mrs. Bates.

"No, tell us. Every once in a while Clem says such bright things."

GOSSIP AND COURTSHIP

"I wish I could remember the words he used. It was to the effect that deep down under all this surface we've been discussing is a layer of bed rock. You can reach it easily enough; it apparently represents the man's real character. But neither steam drill nor dynamite can ever as much as make a scratch. I think that what he was trying to say is that once Hollington's real principles are involved, no amount of outside pressure can make him yield in the slightest particular, let alone abandon his position. And I believe Clem is right."

"What an awful man Dr. Hollington would be had he no imagination or sense of humor," added Mrs. Bates.

"Our paragon is human after all," continued Mrs. Clark. "No farmer's boy in the valley ever fell more hopelessly in love."

"Do you really think so?"

"Frances is the only girl he was ever known to take anywhere, the only one he seems to have eyes for at a party, the only one—"

"I know," objected Mrs. Hastings, "yet when you do see them together he acts so impersonally toward her, treats her just as he would you or me—"

"That's the English influence on his upbringing."

"I wonder," mused Mrs. Hastings, "if Frances will string him along as she has done with Billy Evans."

"It must be immensely flattering to her to have at her feet two such men, men who have always gone with the best girls in the large cities."

THE INTERLOPERS

"Two? Why leave out Edward Winfield?"

"The man of mystery," ejaculated Mrs. Bates.

"Oh, I don't know." Mrs. Clark was on the defensive. "He's so much older, and such an invalid, that I'd never have thought of him in that way."

"Why, it is written all over him. I think he's the one she cares for, too, though of course they could never marry."

"What do you know about him?" demanded Mrs. Bates.

"I've fallen into the habit of going to his house every Wednesday morning, to take him something I've cooked. But I know nothing more about him than you. He's never said a word about himself, his family, or where he came from; yet he's so polite and appreciative that what was at first an act of charity has become a source of pleasure."

"Do you really think he has money?" asked Mrs. Bates.

"He seems to have; he keeps a Filipino cook, a male nurse, and two men the year round to work his farm. I suspect that he's helping more than one of his neighbors through these hard times."

"Does he ever leave his house?"

"Never, except to be wheeled to that little observatory he has had built on the knoll. He tells me there are a great many days when he can't even do that."

"Does Frances visit him often?"

"No, not too often. It's just an impression that comes to me when I see them together."

GOSSIP AND COURTSHIP

"I think you're wrong," said Mrs. Clark. "She's just being nice to him in the same way that you are."

"Perhaps. I can't describe what I saw, but I've my opinion. Goodness, it's after four o'clock. I must hurry home to put on my roast."

"Do you think she really saw anything?" Mrs. Bates waited until Mrs. Hastings was gone.

"No. Jealousy. Winfield is probably so glad to have someone around who is not trying to pry into his affairs that she thinks he's in love. No, if it's anyone with Frances, it's Hollington."

"Do you think she's going to marry him?"

"She'll have to care a great deal for him to do that. There are plenty of persons here who think it would be a fine match for her. Did you ever stop to consider what it means to a woman to be the wife of a general practitioner? Her home life is the maintaining of headquarters for a man who drops in occasionally, irregularly, who never can be counted upon, and who seldom stays long. She is robbed of the happiest time in a woman's life, the early married years before the babies come. In a city it's not so bad, for there's always someone who can step in and make it frequently possible to plan things with some certainty. I have heard people express sympathy for girls who married men in the navy; the idea is more or less the same, but there's no comparison in degree. I don't pretend to know whether Frances will marry Dr. Hollington or not. But there's one thing of which you may be sure, and which the gossips might do well to remember when

THE INTERLOPERS

they accuse her of setting her cap for him. If she marries him it will be in spite of, not because of, his position here."

So long a speech was unusual, and an unusual silence followed it. A psychologist could scarcely have followed the working of the lady's brain during the interval preceding her next question.

"I wonder what kind of a man a Filipino is. Have I ever seen one?"

Then the conversation drifted on, from race types to the merits of Chinamen as cooks. It hopelessly lost tangible sequence among the domestic difficulties and disappointments of country life.

In the meantime, the two principal subjects of discussion, Frances and Robert, had stolen a rare hour late in the afternoon, and were out for a stroll. They stopped by a group of some half dozen trees that had escaped the fury of the freeze.

"Let's go into the heart of the clump." Frances' sensitive mouth was almost wistful. "We might live for a moment in the memory of the old Eden Valley."

"Yes, or dream of the one to come."

"Why, Robert, your voice sounds almost sentimental." She laughed, and care-free as a colt ran among the trees.

The sun was slipping toward the horizon, throwing into harmonious contrast the golden fruit and the rich dark leaves. The dying sea-breeze, stealing in and out among the orange blossoms, turned all outdoors into a fairyland. Happiness took posses-

GOSSIP AND COURTSHIP

sion of the girl; then came seriousness like a shadow over the sun.

"Once it was all like this, Robert, and it will be so again if everyone does his part."

"If everyone does his part as well as you are doing—"

"I? What help do I give?"

"The men in Rosario are working splendidly, too hard perhaps. If the time ever comes, through over strain or some new misfortune, when they become discouraged, it will be only the women who can save us. Your part is to furnish incentive, and to help the men through the dark days. Is anyone better able to do that than you?"

"So the part you assign me, in case of trouble, is to put on a fresh frock and look as pretty as I can."

"No, it's to do just as you are doing now. I have learned many things about you, Frances, that you've never told me. Do you know, except for being with you, my happiest moments come when I hear of your influence, of how a talk with you, or a visit from you, has often brought much needed sunshine into some home. You may not realize it, but you are doing more than any dozen men to put Rosario once more on its feet."

"I'm disappointed in you, Robert. I didn't expect you to descend to flattery."

"That's not flattery, it's the truth. I am serious—"

"Yes, you generally are," and again the old bewitching smile was on her face.

THE INTERLOPERS

The pair left the oasis. Back on the country road, through the shadows of the giant gum trees, under the drooping peppers, they walked in silence. Robert was content in having her near. Tired from a strenuous day, this was a rest. And since he would not speak of the matter nearest his heart, he did not feel inclined to trivial conversation.

On and on they went. She appeared to be wrapped in the glories of the evening. If a break in the trees showed a vista of the hills, they would stop and watch together the play of the delicate purple that threw its soft glamour over sage-brush and rock. Or perhaps a stray cloud, catching the rays of the sun thrown back from the distant ocean, would turn to a crimson ingot, an augury of better days.

"I hope I shall never have to leave Rosario." Robert's quiet tone was surcharged with sincerity. "Where else is there such contentment, or such inspiration for a life work? Do you ever share Ruth's wanderlust?"

"Oh, at times. Not that I should want to leave permanently, but every woman likes to see people and do what others are doing, to go to dances, and dinners, and theatres, to be one of the crowd on the streets, not a mere spectator from the windows. Not just now, while we are all in trouble. But some time, after I have done my bit, as they say. I want the knowledge and experience that comes from wider associations. And the pleasures, too, I suppose."

Robert made no reply. His slow, accurate imagination was picturing what his life would be without

GOSSIP AND COURTSHIP

her. He well knew that with her would go the beauties of the softest days, the charm of the tinted mountains, the fascination of the most wonderful skies. He knew and he feared, yet he hoped, always mutely, that this great love of his would envelop her also, to keep her forever with him, as she was today. And on her part as she watched the shadows come and go on that impressionable face, she, too, fell to picturing the future. Somehow the gay life of her day-dreams didn't seem so alluring if Robert were to be away, fighting and working in Rosario.

If a word was spoken during the last half mile, neither could ever recall it. Perfect quiet, happiness, the serenity of the lotus-eaters was theirs, as they yielded to the age-old fascination which was binding them together against all the world.

But all ecstasy must end when the realities of life intervene.

"Goodbye, Robert," she was saying, as he held her hand and looked at her with moist, appealing eyes. "Today you have earned an answer, and you shall have it very soon."

CHAPTER IX

AN ANGRY FATHER

DINNER was over. A full moon and a cool still air were the summons to come out into the night. The mocking-bird and the rabbit answered, men and women answered. On the old Warner place, in and out of the dying garden, the moonbeams played; around the unpainted shed they fell, even prying into the stuffy, crowded house. Sango looked up from a paper he was reading. He saw a bare pear tree near the window, saw the dew glistening on the grass, saw snow and a cherry tree and old Japan. He went outside, the illusion gone, only to be replaced with a wave of home-sickness. He did not return, but walked on and on. Why? Ask the swallows why they come home in the spring.

Loneliness does not greatly affect the man who prospers by himself, the fisherman who works week after week with no companion. It comes in public places, it comes when no one else is alone. It came to Sango when he passed the white men and women walking arm in arm, their eyes, their thoughts only for each other. It came stronger when Arthur Hancock drove by, with Miss Evans sitting cosily beside him. It came irresistably when Charles Essing met Dorothy Tibbetts, quite by accident, when they stopped to speak to each other, when they walked off together.

AN ANGRY FATHER

Ruth came out of the shadows on an errand bound.

"Good evening, Sango," she said to him kindly.

He tried to say something to her, and grew embarrassed. Both his manner and his embarrassment frightened the girl. As she hurried to pass him, he turned quickly toward her. Whereupon, Ruth lost her head. She ran, ran as never before, to the farm gates and into the house. Sango turned after her a step or two, surprised. He watched the fleeing figure for a moment with an indifference that was mostly assumed. He was puzzled and a little worried. The strange emotions that had impelled him were dissipated by the time he started for home.

Ruth flung herself into her mother's arms, weeping hysterically. Mary Coulters comforted her as well as she could, trying all the while to learn the cause of the trouble. Sam and Frances followed closely, saying nothing. They knew that this was a situation to be handled by no one but the mother. The first intelligible word that came from Ruth was "Sango."

The child had not been touched; her appearance was proof of that. As she quieted down and became coherent, she tried to explain herself. Sango had frightened her; that was all she could say. Just what he had done or said she didn't pretend to remember.

"I spoke to him, and the way he acted when he answered didn't seem right. I tried to pass him, and he came toward me. I started to run and he

THE INTERLOPERS

followed me. And then—oh, mother, I am so glad you were home!”

By this time Frances was helping with her sister. Mary said she was going to put Ruth to bed, so Sam put his arms about the child and kissed her good-night. Left alone, he paced the floor, stopping only to take his revolver from the desk drawer. After an interval, whether of minutes or hours Sam could not have told, Frances came down to him.

“How is she now?” he asked.

“Asleep,” Frances replied.

“How do you feel? And your mother? Do you think I might leave the house for a while?”

“As far as we are concerned. I was afraid you might have left, and I wanted to speak to you first. Father, what are you going to do?”

“Do? Punish Sango and make Rosario a safe place for young girls.”

“Yes, I know. But how?”

“Never mind how, Frances. It’ll be done, you may be sure.”

“You aren’t yourself tonight, father. I’ve seen you do many things. You’ve always planned them deliberately, with calculating forethought. I know you are going to plunge in blindly now, and it worries me more than I can tell. Try to control yourself before you begin.”

“Control myself? With that picture burned into my brain, that picture of Ruth crying on her mother’s breast! Every girl has to learn some time that she is a woman. The beast that shocked Ruth into that

AN ANGRY FATHER

knowledge has to settle a little account with me, and the conditions that made it possible are to be brought to an end. I'm not worrying over who gets hurt in the process."

"I am, father, for it might be you. I'm not giving you any advice. I'm not trying to persuade you to do or not to do anything. We've always prided ourselves that you could think a little farther ahead than anyone else; all I'm asking you is to try to do that now. Take this kiss with you, and remember that you must be careful for our sakes, too."

"You are a good girl, Frances, and I'll try because you wish it. But it's not at all what I want to do. I'm wild to get at them, to fight with my hands, not with my head."

But it's doubtful if he followed Frances' advice as she would have had him do. With nothing in his mind but wild anger he hurried over to the Warner place. Walking around the house he found one room still lighted; it was the kitchen. Without pausing to knock, he flung open the door, and stepping in, demanded to see Sango. Saishoto took it upon himself to act as spokesman for the small group that was seated at the table.

"Why you want see him?"

"Never mind why; where is he?"

"He not here." It was the age-long suspicion of the submerged man. Coulters bore every evidence that his demands were not for Sango's benefit, so Saishoto instinctively sheltered his compatriot.

THE INTERLOPERS

"I believe he is here, and I'm going to look through the house."

"No can do. This our house, not you."

With the words the Japanese were covered by an imposing looking revolver. Sam was a fighter, and no novice at gun play.

"I want to see Sango," he reiterated.

"He not here."

Paying no further attention to the little unarmed men, and still holding his weapon in his hand, Sam pushed through the doorway into the dark hall beyond. As he crossed the threshold he was attacked. A sharp pain tore down his right arm from shoulder to wrist; the revolver fell from his hand. Before he could shake loose from his assailant a dozen were upon him and pinned him to the floor. With his wounded arm Sam's struggles resulted only in more pain, and soon he gave up and lay still.

With much apprehension Frances had watched her father's departure. He was not to be trusted tonight, she was sure. She followed him to the county road so closely as to see that he made his way toward the Warner place. Then she hurried to the village.

Meeting Billy Evans, he saw that something was wrong. He had her story in a moment.

"Come with me to the pool room" he said. "Some of my men are there. Quite a few of them are in town with me tonight. The first thing to do is to get them together."

"I want to find Dr. Hollington, too. He has

AN ANGRY FATHER

made such friends with the Japanese that he has influence with them. I hope Clem Harding is here; he will know what to do."

"I know what to do. Do you mind waiting here a minute, while I step inside?"

When Evans came out two men were with him.

"Here is a giant to act as your body guard," he said to Frances. "You must be careful with him; handle him as you would a piece of machinery. I have told him to do as you say, and he will. Clem is in the livery stable. Now I will leave you, and get some men together to back up whatever play your father is making."

Saishoto didn't know what to do with Coulters. The Japanese talked the matter over excitedly, deciding finally to keep him with them while they sent for Hollington. At a loss to understand the situation, they sent word to the other colonies to gather at Warners'. Those of them that owned rifles or shotguns brought them along. Sam, meanwhile, had been released upon his promise to remain quietly seated until Hollington should arrive.

Some little difficulty was experienced in finding the doctor, for he was not in his office, but Watsa finally caught up with him, and told how Coulters had been made prisoner. Hollington hurried over without delay. Relief came to every one as he walked into the kitchen.

"Hello, Sam! I have heard a wild story about your having tried to shoot up this place and your being held here."

THE INTERLOPERS

"I came for Sango, and I am going to get him."

"What has he done?"

"He stopped Ruth on the road tonight, tried to talk to her, and followed when she ran from him. She is in bed now, sick from the shock."

"That is pretty serious. I will run over to see her in a few minutes. Saishoto, where is Sango?"

"What you do to him?"

"I don't know. He will have to tell us his side of the story first."

"What you mean by that, by his side of the story?" Sam was on his feet, his whole frame shaking with anger. The strain of what had gone before was finding an outlet now.

"You surely are not going to decide on the punishment until Sango has had an opportunity to be heard?"

Coulter's hot retort was interrupted by the noise of many feet, as the yard filled with the men that Evans and Harding had collected. Sam turned towards the doorway, obviously intending to go out to them. Saishoto sprang in front of him.

"You no go now."

"Let him pass, Saishoto. I will help you all I can, but I cannot help you if you put yourself in the wrong. You have no right to keep him here against his will."

So Sam sullenly left, not even thanking the doctor, who was close behind. Coulter felt that Hollington was not on his side in this quarrel.

AN ANGRY FATHER

Billy Evans was all for action. "Have you caught Sango yet?"

"I think he's in that house, but there is no way I can tell."

"Shall we shoot them out, or burn them out?"

"For heaven's sake, men, be sensible. There are more of them than there are of you, they have ten or twelve guns, and all the law is on their side." Hollington was talking earnestly to Evans and Coulters, blind to the fact that the latter was growing more and more hostile. All about them quiet men were crowding in to hear, while from the house came the sound of furniture being moved and of darkened windows being opened.

"What is your plan?" Hollington alone failed to catch the cold sarcasm behind the words.

"Swear out a warrant, have it served regularly. I know I can persuade those boys to respect it."

"And have Sango fined five dollars for disturbing the peace." Hollington noticed it now, and was shocked at the tone. "Advertise it that any damned Jap can insult our girls, that the amusement will cost him only five dollars. It's cheap at the price. Perhaps I can get half for being informer, can sell Ruth's misery for two dollars and a half, real money. Dr. Hollington, such ideas may prevail in your set in New York, but in Rosario we have more respect for our women. You will have to think of something better than that to protect your friends in there."

"Will you give me time to talk to them?"

THE INTERLOPERS

Coulters knew that those about him recognized the justice of this request, that it would not do to allow bloodshed to come to either side until every other resource had been exhausted. So he nodded his head in assent.

Hollington was gone fifteen or twenty minutes.

"Sango is in that house; I have been with him. His story is that he saw a number of other young men with girls, that when he met Ruth he was only trying to ask her, in the nicest possible way, to go for a drive with him."

While he had been listening to Sango, Hollington had had to fight a strong feeling of disgust that there should even be discussed anything so unthinkable in these two spending an evening together in a buggy. And of all persons to have her name so dragged in, it was his friend's daughter, Frances' sister, dainty, lovable Ruth. Still, if he were to be true to his ideals, that feeling must be disregarded, he must judge Sango from Sango's own point of view. No such considerations, however, governed the group to whom he was now speaking, while the feeling of race prejudice was far stronger with them. There was, too, another vital difference between the doctor and themselves. He had listened to Sango's story and was firmly convinced that nothing even disrespectful was intended, while they were equally certain that Sango's real motives were purely lust.

So Robert's report was not well received. Harding came to the front, ostentatiously swinging a rope. Angry mutterings filled the air, all eyes were ex-

AN ANGRY FATHER

pectantly turned on Coulters to see what orders he would give.

"You surely don't intend to let the boy be hanged?" Hollington's voice betrayed his feelings.

"What else can we do?" said Evans. "Is there anything between that and your five dollar fine?"

"They'll kill so many of you."

"We're not afraid."

"Try to think of something else, of something reasonable, and I'll save a number of your lives, for the men in that house will do just what I tell them to do."

"Then tell them to send Sango out to us. Be true to your blood."

"It wouldn't be right to kill that boy for this offense. If I led him out to go to his death, I wouldn't be true to their trust in me. And I won't betray that trust."

"All right, then get out of the way," growled Coulters, "unless you want to be in that house when the shooting commences. Boys,—” he turned to give an order which would have added a red chapter to Rosario's history, when the men about him were pushed apart. Her giant was opening a way through the crowd for Frances.

"You're wrong, Robert. It's horrible to think of Sango's being lynched, whether he deserves it or not. But neither you nor I can judge the justice of it all; we've no right to pit our opinions against a whole group of our neighbors. And further, Robert, are you going to let father risk his life, let some of

THE INTERLOPERS

these people who have extended you their friendship be killed because they don't accept your definition of what is wrong? Even if you're right, their lives are worth more than his, your duty is first of all to them.

"I am all woman, Robert, I cannot bear to think of what will happen to Sango. Yet that does not weigh against father's life with me, and it must not with you." There was a veiled threat behind the words, a threat clearly understood by both.

Robert looked into the eyes he loved, his soul yearning to do something, to do anything for this girl. And all the time he knew that he could not.

"Can't you see that we must have that boy?" Evans had waited for the doctor to make some reply before he asked the question. "If we go home now, as you seem to wish, no woman in this valley will be safe from insult. If we tell those Asiatics that such an act as Sango's may be done with impunity, are they more than human that they will not accept our invitation? We are where we simply have to go on."

"Look at these people, Robert," continued Frances. "They are not a mob. It's the vigilance committee again protecting California. You bring Sango to them, Robert, and I know we can persuade them to do what is right."

"Frances, neither for you nor for anyone else will I lure that boy to his death. If there is any persuading to be done the proper time is now."

"There are possible punishments other than hanging," the quiet voice of Donald Scott broke the dead-

AN ANGRY FATHER

lock. "I read that the whipping post had been revived somewhere on the eastern coast. We might use that or think of something else. Suppose, young man, that we promise not to kill Sango, will you try to bring him peaceably to us?"

"Yes!"

"Well, Sam, can we make that promise?"

Coulters turned leisurely to look at Scott, then let his eyes wander over the group. He saw Billy Evans, a terrier on leash. He saw Clem Harding, his arms freed by coiling the rope over one shoulder and under the other. He caught Frances' glance, and the two smiled at each other. For the old, grey fox was himself again, weighing, discarding, playing for the future. He saw Bates and Hastings, and Towers, Graham, Watson, and Hancock, everywhere the faces of neighbors and friends who were trusting their lives to his judgment. He saw a knot of strangers from the mines, grouped behind their chief, who in turn awaited but a word to throw them into action.

He saw Hollington, the man who had so recently been, perhaps, his closest friend, and possible son-in-law. He tried not to judge harshly, tried to persuade himself that this slight, quiet boy, the youngest of them all, who had been unmoved by fifty men under the sway of passion, who had had his way against them, was to be praised rather than blamed. But stronger than his own will and his reason was a feeling he could not not down, that came from the

THE INTERLOPERS

knowledge that Hollington had been against him, against Ruth and Frances, had taken the part of the Japanese. Sensitive to a fault on any question of loyalty, he could not control the tone of his voice when at last he spoke:

“We promise. See what you can do.”

CHAPTER X

THE BREACH

WITHOUT a word Hollington turned, and once more entered the cottage. He went direct to Sango.

"You must come with me. Your fault was great, speaking to that girl as you did; you will have to be punished so that no other white woman will be frightened like that."

Sango grasped the meaning, though he did not understand the words as Saishoto did.

"What they do to him?" asked the latter.

"No one knows. They will decide when they have Sango."

"I see guns and rope. They kill him?"

"They'll not kill him, Saishoto."

"I hear him say—"

"They meant to at first, but they have promised me not to, and they will keep that promise if you send Sango out to them."

"I no go! I no go!" cried the terrified boy.

Saishoto, disregarding him, began to talk to the others in their native language. His argument was that if the boy was not to be killed, they owed him no further duty. If they gave in to the white men on this occasion, they would not be waiving any of their rights, nor would they stultify themselves. And the doctor wanted them to; he had always been

THE INTERLOPERS

their friend, he wouldn't ask this of them were it not for the best.

It was agreed. Sango, like a trapped animal seeking escape, made a wild dash for the hall. But a dozen hands seized him. Struggling, biting, kicking, he was carried out to the waiting whites. The rope was requisitioned; he was triced in an instance. Two of Evans' huskies picked up the slight frame, and the crowd, led by Coulters, started for some quiet place where they might hold a council of war.

They did not all go, however. The Japanese were consumed with curiosity to know what would become of Sango. But they had been too nearly in battle to consider satisfying that curiosity. They trooped back to their house talking excitedly in low tones.

Frances remained, because a woman's presence was no longer needed. Her shadow stood beside her, since no one had thought to change his orders. And Hollington stayed.

"Frances, what is it that has come between us?"

"I don't know, Robert; you wouldn't lie, even for me. I ought to honor you for that. You were right the entire time, you accomplished single-handed what all those men couldn't have done without a heavy loss of life, if even then. I ought to be proud of you. If what you did had been done for us, you would be the hero of Rosario. What were your motives, Robert?"

"Motives? I had none; I did what I knew was

THE BREACH

right. I suppose you are going home. May I walk over with you?"

Frances hesitated. "I'm so unstrung by what has happened tonight that I hardly know what I'm saying or doing. I want to get to bed, to cry myself to sleep. I want to be alone. You don't mind, do you?"

Of course, Hollington said no; there are some lies he was not above telling. He walked slowly toward his office, passing the groves he had learned to love, through the valley that had become his home. He wondered how seriously Frances was offended; what Coulters' feelings towards him were going to be; if the people as a whole would condemn him as Sam had done. Had he really been a renegade? If so, would Frances ever forgive him? Yes, he told himself, if she really loved him she would forgive him anything that was not dishonorable. What he did could not have been dishonorable, because it was right. But if she did not love him? Had the answer come to her tonight, to her and to him?

He reached his office in a depressed frame of mind. Sitting idly in his chair, his eyes rested on a row of books that he had scarcely touched. In the other room he remembered there were some boxes of unpacked laboratory paraphernalia. Always there remained to him that research work.

Frances dismissed her guard before she reached the house. Ruth and the mother were asleep, so instead of going in at once, she lay down on the porch hammock, pulled a robe over her, and fell

THE INTERLOPERS

to watching the landscape with unseeing eyes: Hours later, Evans and Coulters found her there, asleep.

"I'm glad you are up," said her father, waking her. "Billy is to spend the night here, for it's too late to go back to the mine. Besides, we're both rather tired."

"Is it all over and settled, father?"

"Yes, in a way." Frances shuddered.

"It was the famous story over again, of putting the bell on the cat," said Billy. "We talked over a lot of ideas, and nothing offered that seemed any better than old Donald's plan. We argued about how it was to be done, and settled all the gruesome details. But we couldn't find anyone who would do it. So we took the boy to the edge of the town, pointed his face to the coast, and told him never to come back. That incident is closed."

Frances stole up to her father, slipping her arm through his.

"It might have been such a different ending."

By tacit consent, out of a delicate respect for each other's position, no one followed up that last remark.

Worry is a poor bedfellow. Hollington didn't sleep well that night, and the feeling of depression was still with him in the morning. He started his round of calls with a good deal of trepidation. If his conduct of the night before had so affected the Coulters it was reasonable to expect that less close friends would be even more estranged. Yet call after call showed no apparent difference. Of

THE BREACH

course, the story was all over the valley. It was generally believed that the doctor, exercising his well-known influence with the Japanese, had persuaded them to surrender Sango to be run out of the settlement. Such conduct was so entirely natural as hardly to warrant comment.

The wild stories that there had been plans to lynch the boy were not generally accepted. One could hardly believe that men would seriously contemplate hanging a boy for such an offense, unless one had happened to be present and under the spell of mob violence. Most of those who were there belittled the matter, through a feeling of shame. The situation had worked out well, and it was only human nature that those who had participated should like to give out the impression that the final outcome was what had really been intended from the first.

While the doctor was making his morning calls, Coulters had drifted over to see Edward Winfield. Sam was so nervous and restless this morning that it fretted him not to be able to speak in his own house either of his bitterness toward the Japanese or of his disappointment in Robert Hollington. The old pioneer was not of the breed to waste daylight in any such frivolous way as the relieving of his feelings by talk. He had some business to transact with Winfield, which he believed to be the sole reason for his visit. When the work was completed, conversation turned to general topics. Under the circumstances, some mention of the Japanese was

THE INTERLOPERS

bound to occur sooner or later, and with the first allusion to them came the story of the night before.

Sam was not very voluble, but Edward was interested enough to draw out the story. Of course, Winfield heard it as Coulters had seen it, especially regarding Sango's motives, and it was also so plausible that there seemed to be no doubt of its accuracy. The invalid made few comments, but he listened sympathetically and asked many questions..

When that stirring evening had been exhausted, the conversation began to lag. Edward's restless mind wandered to recollections of the Japanese in their native country.

"You have never been to Japan, have you?" he asked. "I used to be an inveterate globe trotter, and was forever stopping over there on one jaunt or another. The last trip I was able to make was to Tokio and the mountains of the east coast. The natives have some customs that are curious, perhaps it would be fairer to say that are different from ours. For instance, one comes to me which not only illustrates this idea but shows after all what a small world is ours. Have you ever seen Kotingo?"

"Kotingo? Oh, Saishoto's picture-bride."

"She passed me a day or so ago when I was out in my chair. She remembered me, for tourists are not frequent in her old home, and when she spoke, I, too, remembered her. You never could guess where I saw her last; it was in Sendai, where she was a professional prostitute."

Sam's surprise was ludicrous.

THE BREACH

"If she were a white girl, and I knew such a fact in her history, every decent instinct in a man would demand that I should keep this information to myself." Edward was defending himself from the imputation of Sam's manner. "But suppose I knew a girl who was married to someone in this valley, and at the time I had been acquainted with her she was a working girl, do you think there would be any indelicacy in recalling the fact? There is a loss of caste among us for the girl who works, to be sure, and there is a loss of caste in Japan for the girl who does what Kotingo did. You know how insignificant a matter the first case is, the other is even more trivial. It is a strangely consistent working out of national ideas on the subject of morality."

To Edward Winfield, broadened by travel and sickness, the recital was as impersonal as though he had been describing a picturesque costume or a religious ritual. Like so many persons, he too readily ascribed to others little characteristics of his own, so he must not be judged harshly because his own tolerance in this case was shared by no one in Rosario.

To Sam Coulters the story was one to be seized with delight. He was growing bitter towards these yellow men who were frustrating and threatening him, his family, and the community he was trying to guard. That one of their leaders, one of his arch enemies was married to a lewd woman brought a feeling of repose to this vindictive old fighter.

The story made Mrs. Coulters uncomfortable.

THE INTERLOPERS

Of course, she knew that such things existed, but, idealist and dreamer that she was, she kept all thoughts of them as much as possible in the background. When a case as flagrant as this was brought out and flaunted in her face, was made almost a part of her own life, her feelings—well, they might be compared to those of an ardent collector who finds that one of his choicest treasures is but a spurious imitation.

It was on a Friday evening that Ruth had had her unpleasant experience, and now Sunday afternoon had come, the afternoon that Frances and Robert had long ago become accustomed to save for each other. Hollington was puzzled to know what was expected of him today. He thought of a pretext for calling Frances on the telephone, trusting that a conversation with her would clear the situation. But the operator reported the Coulters' line out of order.

A trifle upset, too nervous for inaction, he took his motor from its shed and started for the post office. On the way he met Frances afoot. Of course, he asked her to take a seat in his car, and learning that her mission was to leave a book with Mrs. Clark, he drove to Montemar, the Clark home. That done, the force of habit took hold of both, and they found themselves idly travelling the old familiar trail towards the mountains.

Little was said, for each felt a certain amount of restraint, while uncertain of the attitude of the

THE BREACH

other. They came to the Kraemer tract, Saishoto's home.

"Do you mind if I run in there a moment?" Robert asked. "I've been experimenting on some guinea pigs that Saishoto is taking care of for me. I'm wondering how they look today; you might find them interesting yourself."

"Do you have to see them right away?"

"No."

"Then please drive on." And Robert, sensitive to every fleeting change in her humor, did so unhesitatingly.

Just off the floor of the valley, shading a knoll which commanded a view of nearly all Rosario, stood an immense oak. One great branch pointed at the heart of the settlement. About ten feet above the ground it ran, almost horizontally, carrying wide spread foliage impervious alike to rain and to sun. Underneath it Robert steered his car, and once again Frances and he were in a spot surcharged with memories. Very quietly they sat today, dreamily contemplating the baking plain, idly watching the coming and going of the little whirlwinds.

"I can almost see my guinea pigs from here," Robert remarked. He was but making conversation, for once entirely out of tune with her thoughts and feelings.

"Do you go to Saishoto's home very often?" she asked.

"Every day while this experiment is running."

"How soon do you expect to finish?"

THE INTERLOPERS

"It will be all over in a few days."

"After that I suppose you will not go there any more?"

"Certainly I shall. Saishoto is Hanba's representative here, the natural and official leader of the Japanese. They bring all their troubles and disputes to him. He settles those that are simple, but there are many knotty ones, dealing with all the ramifications of American life, on which he needs my help."

"Oh!" sighed Frances; relief was patent. "Then he could call at your office instead of your going to him."

"It couldn't be done in that way, for my relations with them are not as formal as that would imply. You know these people better than to suppose that they would admit not being able to handle the little affairs of life without outside aid. If there happen to be several of the boys around when I drop in, my views are asked merely as a matter of general interest. Or I can be told of some discussion if Saishoto and his wife are alone. It really doesn't take any more of my time to go to them, and in that way I can make it better suit my convenience."

"I wasn't thinking so much of your time and convenience." Frances spoke in a low, soft voice, without a trace of feeling behind the words. She clearly was trying to say more, but found it difficult.

"You're making me talk in the dark, Frances. Please tell me of what you're thinking."

"I must. Father saw Edward Winfield this morn-

THE BREACH

ing, and in some way learned that the woman Saishoto married—it is so hard to tell you what I mean.”

“Perhaps, you’re referring to the life she led before she left Japan?”

“Do you know about it?”

“I know what Saishoto told me.”

“What her husband told you! I wonder if we’re both referring to the same thing.”

“We are.”

“And you have gone to her house regularly, knowing all about her?”

“She doesn’t appear to have been coarsened; she is quiet and friendly.”

“Why, Robert, you surely haven’t made friends with her.”

“Oh, yes, I have.”

“How could you?”

“Because I’ve taken over a trust left me by Dr. Alling, which necessitates my doing so.”

“You can fulfill your duty without seeing this woman or going to her home.”

“Frances, you are unreasonable. You know I haven’t the slightest interest in her——”

“That remark was unnecessary.” She showed she was hurt.

“Please be frank with me. I know something is wrong. Am I not entitled to be told?”

“You are, if I can do so, but I scarcely understand it myself. Something in me cries out at the thought of your talking to such a woman on a friendly basis, and then coming to see me. If I

THE INTERLOPERS

could give my reasons for feeling this way I would. But I haven't reasoned it out and come to the conclusion that what you're doing is wrong; I feel that way because every instinct in me is repelled at the thought. If I tried to argue it with you, you would still feel that I was unreasonable, for no matter how badly I might be worsted in the discussion, nevertheless I would be sure I was right. Tell me that I am a prudish, simple-minded country girl, that the world accepts such things, that it means nothing to the Japanese, that I am uncharitable, that there is no similarity between your friendship for her and for me, that that phase of her life is past, so that you can carry no pollution, and I will answer that it makes no difference, that women react to impulses finer than those of men, impulses that vary widely among women themselves. It so happens that my life, my bringing up, my character, has made it impossible for me to tolerate your having that woman for a friend while you are calling regularly on me. I don't want to be narrow, I don't want to feel that way, there is nothing voluntary about it. It's something I can't help."

"Is the feeling as strong as that?"

"It's more than a feeling, Robert, it's part of me."

"You tell me that there is no use in my trying to persuade you that you are wrong. But if I could show you that in this particular case the conditions do not hold which primarily would make your conduct not only justifiable but commendable, if I could

THE BREACH

show you that what I'm doing is both proper and necessary, would you still remain so determined?"

"I am afraid so."

"Will you grant that my conception of my duty as Dr. Alling's successor is correct? Will you concede that unless I keep my relations with those Japanese just what they are I shall be unable to fulfill my obligation as far as they are concerned? You're as familiar with the circumstances as I am myself; it ought not to be necessary for me to argue these points with you."

"It isn't. I know what you mean, and undoubtedly you're right."

"Then it follows that no matter how terrific becomes the outside pressure, no matter how much I may desire to please you, I must go on, be the consequences what they may."

"Be the consequences what they may?"

"Yes, for to do otherwise would be to do a great wrong."

"There is another way of looking at it, Robert."

"What is that other way?"

"You took up this task voluntarily."

"Yes."

"So you have the right to abandon it whenever you choose."

"If I only could believe so! I would give anything to be able to put it all aside, but I cannot."

"You'll never be repaid, hardly even thanked, for what you are doing for these Japanese."

THE INTERLOPERS

"It's not for them, it's because I must do what's right."

"We appear to have reached an impasse."

They sat in silence. Then minute after minute went by, each waiting for the other to give in, each without heat or feeling knowing that he could not be the one to do so. Frances it was who ended the unpleasant situation.

"I think you'd best take me home now," she said, "for I'm tired. I'm so little used to excitement that I have not even yet recovered from Friday night."

"Perhaps the fault lies with me," she murmured, as the car slowly turned toward Rosario.

He did not answer at once. The conversation was becoming punctuated with intervals during which neither spoke, intervals which were growing longer and increasingly difficult to break. And the words, when they did come, were slow, deliberate, carefully chosen.

"If you cared for me as I want you to, I can't help feeling that you would accept my necessity, close your eyes to the unpleasant features of the situation, and trust me."

"Trusting you is not an issue. If I loved a man, it would be with an overpowering passion which would take complete possession of me, which would govern my every thought and feeling, and which would demand so much in return that it couldn't tolerate a loyalty higher than the one due me, nor an association with anything that was not absolutely clean. I have always known that I was an idealist,

THE BREACH

but never before did I realize to what an extent. Robert, it's everything or nothing with me."

"Then, if I remain true to my ideals, if I refuse to stultify myself, if I believe that no true happiness can ever be founded on wrong-doing, and act according to that belief, am I—am I," he paused again, hesitatingly, then turned to her with sad, unflinching eyes, "am I receiving my answer?"

They were almost home. She did not reply while the car was turning from the county road, nor while it was on the driveway. But when they had circled the house and stopped opposite the front steps and he had turned off his engine, she knew that she must say something before she left her seat.

"I am sorry, more so than you will ever know. I wish I could explain it to you better, for you are entitled to more explanation. I wish I could understand it better myself. It hurts me to see you aligned with those people who have shown themselves, on every occasion, to be the implacable enemies of the people I love."

She was on the ground now, offering her hand. She betrayed emotion and suffering which belied her carefully chosen words, and which encouraged Hollington to ask.

"May I come over, to discuss this with you again?"

"It would only give pain to us both." She was speaking very deliberately with an apparent struggle for self-possession. If there had been a trace of

THE INTERLOPERS

heat or of anger, if there were anything that could be changed, it would be different.

"Then," for the first time since his childhood he lost control of himself. Even such self-possession as his could not stand this strain, as with tears on his cheeks and breaking voice, he asked, "Is this good-bye?"

"Good-bye, Robert. May God reward you, if I cannot, for being the big, strong man that you are."

CHAPTER XI

COULTERS STUMPS THE STATE

A political boss is a man who is able to exact the fulfillment of his wishes by the makers and executives of local laws. How he acquires this power is one of the mysteries of our civic life. Accident and personality, combined with work, perseverance and foresight are concomitants. Once established he holds his position as the virtual clearance house of all who have something to gain or something to fear from the established authorities. For those who walk in the shadow of the law, the denizens of the brothels and the dives, he trades protection for support, for votes at election time.

Naturally, if when some poor devil is in trouble mysterious powers from above take interest enough in his existence either to clear him if his offense be trivial, or to mitigate the punishment if deserved, there is produced a supporter of the organization which offered more friendship than had ever before been extended to him. Of a surety he will vote as that organization wishes; he may be called upon for any small services. More valuable still, when men are seated about a table or grouped in some idle knot, and discussion turns to any man or measure in which the organization is interested, there is consistently added one more loyal voice.

Unless born reformers, men do not care to antag-

THE INTERLOPERS

onize public opinion. If there are five together, three of whom believe in the truth of some subject under discussion on which the other two have no decided views, it is human nature for those others to keep silent, and more often than not, still following the lines of least resistance, to accept the opinion of the majority. So is public sentiment created.

If some quasi-public corporation is asked for funds, it expects and receives in return deference to its wishes whenever laws affecting itself are under discussion. If one holds office by virtue of the organization's consent or help, he is expected to make such return as he can through influencing his friends and his family. In fact, his ability so to do is usually a condition precedent to his employment. All through the intimate affairs of life run the wires. The same hand that protects one woman in the restricted district may open to another the doors of some exclusive reception; the man who gratifies his vanity by holding office in some prominent club may thank the same power that helps a down and outer secure his daily stipend of morphine. It is all one vast trade, with some central figure, known at large, who is in a position to exact the best of every bargain.

Such was Rutherford White. It was the satisfying of his ambition, the love of power, that appealed to him, rather than the emoluments, for these latter had to be divided among a large number of associates. There was the thrill and exhilaration of a perpetual fight and a perpetual uncertainty.

COULTERS STUMPS THE STATE

No one knew better than himself that his tenure was founded on the fact that ninety-five men in a hundred may be disregarded on normal occasions; they stay at home, or vote blindly, or wastefully, or neutralize each other. No one knew better than himself that what he could demand or give was not fixed by precedent or custom, but was a wide open scramble for the quickest brain. No one knew better than himself how at any moment an error in decision might wreck him, how many apparently friendly hands were really reaching for his throat, how much hatred, jealousy, and revenge lay in the foundation of his superstructure.

Sam Coulters made a rather secret call upon him.

"It's the same business that brought me here before," he said. "We must have a law to prevent the Japanese from owning land in California."

"You tried it once, Sam. Stop butting your head against a stone wall. I can find something better for you to do; how would you like to make the race for county recorder? The back-country is entitled to more than it has been receiving."

"Thanks, but I'm working on a different line. I'm going to put through that land law and you're going to help."

"I can't afford to be behind schemes that fail. You know I was not born chairman of the central committee, and that it's not a life job. In fact you once particularly called my attention to the fact that I could easily be unseated. Suppose the gang begins to say, 'He's working for that Japanese land law,

THE INTERLOPERS

but he can never put it over; old White is losing his grip.' How long do you think I'd last?"

"I'm not going to run you out into the open this time." Sam spoke as one who gives orders rather than asks favors. "You are to help crystallize public sentiment. We can put the affair in such shape that if it falls through again your connection with it will not become known, while if it carries you will be credited with having retrieved your most conspicuous failure. And this time it's not going to be blocked."

"I'm willing to listen, for you usually talk sense. But you can't do anything more than we did last spring. The facts haven't changed, at least not for the better. Suppose you do work it through the legislature, it'll be killed on orders from Washington."

"We'll succeed in spite of Washington!"

"You're foolish, Sam. Even if you could pass your law, the supreme court would nullify it for conflicting with federal treaties."

"We must frame a law that will not do so. That brings me to one of the things I want you to do. Send word to the attorney general to give me the legal advice I require."

"That I'm glad to do. But can't you see that no matter what you do Diester will be told to drop it, and it'll end there?"

"Would it worry you very much if he were unable to carry out such orders?"

"You old fox!" laughed White, for he thoroughly

COULTERS STUMPS THE STATE

enjoyed this turn in the conversation. "I refuse to answer on advice of counsel."

"Without risking anything at all, wouldn't it be possible for you to persuade Diester to keep his hands off? Say until he receives direct orders to interfere."

"Easy as falling off a log. But you surely are not planning to buck Diester, too?"

"He proved once that he can take orders as readily as he can give them. He probably was right in refusing to over-ride the governor's veto, but his motive in so doing was simple obedience to those above. I'm not exactly going to buck Diester, I'm merely trying to fix things so that he'll hear a louder noise from the west side of the mountains than from the east."

"Why not persuade him to put it through again?"

"Simply because it can't be done that way. We've already had it proven to us that Diester can't disobey Washington, and that legislators who vote for a measure when he tells them to will just as readily vote against it on his orders."

"I see there's no use trying to talk you out of this. I would try hard, too, if I thought there was the least use. Some things are difficult to do, some are impossible. I have seen few difficult things put over; once in a while one gets by. But of the others, never a one. Take the advice of a man who knows, Sam, drop it."

"You may be mistaken."

"I wouldn't be where I am if I made mistakes of

THE INTERLOPERS

this kind. You know when to pick oranges and when to plow. You aren't guessing at what you do, you know your business. Credit me with knowing mine."

"All right, I will. You're going to coöperate with me to the best of your ability, but always in the dark. You're going to help organize the public demand. When we're through you will have Diester in a hole. He will lose favor either with the federal bunch or with the people of this state. In which case there is a chance that Rutherford White may step into his shoes."

"Such an idea has never entered my head."

"Oh yes it has, for I just put it there."

Next to White the most important name on Coulters' list was Chandler Young, the attorney general. So Sam caught a train for the state capital. White's letters, both the formal one he gave Coulters and the confidential one he forwarded himself, opened Young's office to the Rosarian.

"The difficulty in this case, Mr. Coulters," Chandler Young had been listening with the greatest interest to the plans of his caller, "is that we can't pass a law which prohibits all aliens from owning land in California, because the state needs outsiders for its development. Nor can we have a law which discriminates, as you well know."

"There is one discrimination, Mr. Young, established many years ago, which was accepted by Japan before she became so militantly sensitive about equal rights. I mean the fact that her people are not

COULTERS STUMPS THE STATE

eligible to citizenship here. This oversight can't be remedied now, for Californians will tolerate voting by Japanese no more than intermarriage with them. Some things are sacred to us. I am going to hammer away at that one weak spot, and I want you to help me with the first blow. Can you frame a law which will prohibit the buying or leasing of land by foreigners, except such as have a right to become naturalized?"

"Certainly I can draft such a law."

"In such a way that it will comply with all existing treaties and constitutional provisions?"

"I wouldn't want to say yes off hand, but it surely seems to me that I could. Suppose you come around at this time tomorrow. I will look up the law and can then answer you definitely."

When Sam returned the following day he was handed a lengthy typewritten document. It was the new anti-alien land law, approved and sanctioned by Chandler Young. He requested Sam to regard the participation of the attorney general's office as a purely confidential matter, for there might be a good deal of criticism aroused if the facts became generally known. Sam promised, then he devoted his attention to the written words. The interview closed with felicitations on both sides, on one for the perfect manner in which the law had been drawn, on the other for the clever way in which it had been conceived.

"Now to get it passed," said Sam.

"I have drawn it just as carefully as though I

THE INTERLOPERS

were to go before the supreme court tomorrow, to defend it. But it can never become a law. If you were on the inside you would understand how impossible it is for state politicians to disobey the big federal patronage givers, and you know as well as I that the Japanese government will persuade the United States government to suppress this."

"It has to be backed by men who are more afraid to let go than to hold on. You and White have done well. Now I'm going to do something that neither of you could do."

"What is that?"

"Talk to the farmers. I'm going to travel around a bit, see some rural editors, some state senators and assemblymen who live in the country, and some people who have been having the same troubles that we have had in Eden Valley."

So for a month Sam was missing from his accustomed haunts. A great many people can be seen in thirty days, and if they're talked to convincingly on a subject in which they are vitally interested, more than a few will turn crusaders themselves. Sam Coulters was big enough to have dominated such men as White, Young, Diester, one might almost include the governor of the state. He was clever enough to know whom to see; his honesty of purpose fairly radiated; his enthusiasm was contagious. So he left in his wake hundreds of stirring articles in papers, and crusaders and disciples of all degrees of zeal, who in turn collected followers of their own.

If he had been preaching a new doctrine, if he

COULTERS STUMPS THE STATE

had had to educate or overcome scepticism, his success could not have been so great. But he only asked people to act; their beliefs were already established. He did not have to persuade the editor that the Japanese were a menace, he merely had to suggest to him the importance of the matter appearing more drastically in his paper. There was no miracle in the aroused public sentiment that followed him through the state. The only credit he was willing to accept was that he had seen the opportunity, and had had the ability to start the movement. Once there had been furnished a definite objective upon which to concentrate, support came from everywhere.

California is a large state with many interests. If the rural districts only were aroused while the cities were lethargic there would not be the universal sentiment behind this legislation which would be necessary to enable it to weather the troubles ahead. The cities are notoriously indifferent to the sufferings of the country, for they have become satiated with complaints and tales of disasters. So Sam cast about to find some means of interesting the urban people.

His first work was among the labor unions. These are composed of men who have learned from experience more than from study, the basic economic truth that the wages of the unskilled man are the smallest that will keep body and soul together. That the laws of the theorists may be perverted is illustrated by the fact that for years the hod-carriers of

THE INTERLOPERS

San Francisco were paid six dollars for an eight hour day. To accomplish such a result in the face of Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill meant an aggressive insistence upon and a jealous guarding of every claimed prerogative. The extent to which this was carried is illustrated by the fact that for a long time concrete construction was not allowed in San Francisco, for the simple reason that building in that way eliminated both hod-carrier and brick-layer.

Unions and free and untrammelled competition in the labor markets cannot exist side by side. There is a constant menace to the artificial conditions established by the trade combinations in the existence in the community of a body of unorganized men. The Japanese could not be absorbed, their starvation point was far below that of the white men, and they were efficient.

But for that last characteristic they might have been over-ridden. The great golden state harbors many races of workers within its borders. The Indian and the Mexican are indigenous, but their shiftlessness and low mental development have prevented them from being dangerous competitors in the labor market. So with the Hindus and many emigrants from the southern parts of Europe. The man in the ditch is not a menace until he turns ambitious eyes towards the man on the scaffold.

Coulters decided to have missionary work done among the councils. In this he was no pioneer, for one of the commonest tricks in politics is to exploit

COULTERS STUMPS THE STATE

the fears and ambitions of the body of working men. Sam did not essay this task himself. He knew where his weaknesses lay, as well as his talents. It was one thing to meet men of his own stamp, of the class with which he had been reared and which he so well understood, and to impress them through his greater knowledge of their own interests. It was another to fence with the sharp wits and specialized training that had brought the cleverest mechanics out of the ranks and into positions of trust. So Sam fell back on his ally.

Rutherford White's reception was in the nature of an ovation.

"I've not done anything remarkable," protested Sam.

"Well, at least you out-guessed us all. You are doing great work for me. Diester dare not openly oppose you, and hasn't been able to hit on any indirect way to stop you. He's so badly worried that he has even called on me for help. In the east they're taking the matter calmly, for they know they've but to give the word at the proper time for this agitation to die out. They know their own powers, Sam. You've done a great deal more than we insiders had dreamed was possible, you have done so well that it hurts me to see you go on to a certain cropper. You're getting to be a big man in the state, Sam. Cash in your popularity while you have it. It's always negotiable for some good office, which would pay a salary that would keep the Japanese question from ever worrying you."

THE INTERLOPERS

"Thanks, but I'm not here for office. I've not finished this fight by any means. I want you to send some right smart men to the trades' councils of the state, to work them up as I've worked up the farmers. Send some one with imagination enough to frighten union labor, and it will fall in line just as enthusiastically as agriculture has done."

"I will do that much for you. I mean for you. Diester is in so deep now that this will not do any particular good to me. Lord, but I admire your spirit! Man alive, you are going down with your flags flying, you make me want to climb aboard. All that keeps me from doing so is a life long training in looking after myself. The legislature meets before long now." White was abruptly steering away from his dangerous enthusiasm. "What are you going to do in the meantime?"

"Mill around to see what opposition there is inside the state."

"You'll not find much. They say that large employers of labor want Japanese in California, but I have not found that true. No one seems more thoroughly to dislike the Japanese than the man who employs them in numbers."

"How about those who feel sorry for them? People who think they are oppressed, treated with prejudice and unfairly, who want them to have every opportunity to develop themselves?"

"I know what you mean. There may be some such, but in view of the facts they cannot be numerous nor can they hold to their beliefs with much

COULTERS STUMPS THE STATE

determination. Disregard them, and stay in the back country."

"My work there is done. The more I can make the leaders believe that this awakening is spontaneous in themselves the more enthusiastically will they proclaim the new doctrine. If I go back to them again I'll weaken the whole effect."

"You're right, man, you always seem to be right. Are you going to your farm in Rosario?"

"I have the hardest work of all ahead of me. It's with the big papers in the city."

"Why, Sam, you're news. They will print anything you say."

"While I'm trying to make them preach. But they'll listen to me now, I have progressed that far."

"I wonder how it is that Diester lets this slide along so quietly. I would have expected him either to scare you out or to buy you off."

"He has tried both."

CHAPTER XII

HOLLINGTON VISITS THE INDIANS

IT was when Dr. Hollington assumed the medical supervision of the Cuyamaca tribe that he first became interested in the Indians. He had known in a vague way that there were several thousand of them in the county, practically all of whom lived on reservations where they were housed and clothed and fed by the government. He had seen them at intervals in the streets of the village, had frequently come across them in his reading, and had time and again heard them discussed by the Rosarians. The printed descriptions were so at variance with the spoken opinions that Robert came to the conclusion that only those who idealized them wrote of the aborigines, while those who talked about them at all were impregnated with dislike.

As neither from his own casual observation, nor from excessive praise or prejudiced condemnation could the doctor secure the scientific accuracy which he felt necessary to an intelligent understanding of the Indian, he decided to make a study at first hand. The southwestern tribes had been so long in contact with civilization, with the Spanish padre or the American settler, that the evolution through which they were now passing would undoubtedly be revealed by history. So he delved into books.

He learned about their primeval religion and cus-

HOLLINGTON VISITS THE INDIANS

toms, but as their god, Chinigchinick, had carried into oblivion all of one and most of the other, neither of those things could have much influence on living representatives. Once a great factor had been war, cruel, treacherous war for plunder, but that, too, had disappeared generations ago. He learned how their houses had been built of limbs of trees interwoven with oak leaves, a method of construction which, strange as it may seem, is the greatest cause of the dying out of the race. The food had included every living thing upon which they could lay their hands, save only the rattlesnake and the bear. Their clothes and their morals had been so changed by contact with civilization and the church that ancient history and tribal traditions were now without weight. One great truth history did reveal, that of all the native races of the two Americas, none were much lower in the scale of civilization than the immediate ancestors of the Cuyamacas.

Armed with the knowledge he had gleaned from the printed volumes, Hollington drove to the reservation. It consisted of some thirty homes, scattered over several miles of a narrow valley. These were a pastoral people in a country where bottom land was scarce and poor, where mountains were huge and barren. So they built at some distance from each other, according to the size and shape of the fields they tilled.

Only the ancient river bed was worthy of cultivation. On one side it was flanked by a long, inhospitable ridge, whose steep sides, covered from foot to

THE INTERLOPERS

crest with dark, impenetrable scrub oak and chaparral, were awash when the water was high. From the other bank the land rose as a great, sloping shelf, smooth and brown and dry. It seemed to be covered with nothing but dusty, thirsty sage. But a closer scrutiny revealed great beds of chollas, hidden among the brush, while close to the stony ground, and with little help from nature, countless small shrubs, grasses, miniature cacti and aloes struggled for existence. Bordering the edge of this rise were the sides of the mountain, a rangy structure so gracefully proportioned that the pines on its summit were almost a paradox.

Here and there were breaks in the true sweep from stream bed to hill. Perhaps it was a ditch cut by water coming from springs among the timber, perhaps a ridge running out from the mountain, or even a butte rising without excuse near the edge of the dry creek. It was on these elevations that the Indians had settled, their inherited habit of watching enemies taking them to points from which they could survey the valley, rather than establishing them near the scenes of their work. All the houses faced the valley and ran parallel with it; no digger Indian ever willingly built with more depth than length, or erected an addition in the rear when it was practicable to build on the side.

The typical house consisted of either one room or two. The walls were of adobe, a sun baked native clay. So poor a material was this, and so primitive the means of cementing it, that even a

HOLLINGTON VISITS THE INDIANS

single story required construction three or four feet thick. The roofs were of tule, fastened into bundles and laid across rough rafters cut from the branches of trees. There was allowed to every room one door and one window, both facing the road. The doors consisted of a few boards crudely fastened together, the windows of small panes of glass seldom intact. Three walls were blank and there was no provision for ventilation, even the window and the door being opened only when necessary. Before the Spaniards had introduced adobe bricks the Indians had formed their walls of interwoven oak twigs, through which the wind passed freely. At that time the problem had been to protect themselves from the weather, so through the centuries there had become ingrained the habit of closing everything as nearly tight as possible. This habit persisting after walls and roofs, under Spanish influence, had become impervious to air, was the reason why tuberculosis spread so rapidly and took such a terrible toll among the natives.

To Robert, as he drove through, the characteristics of the valley seemed to be heat and thirst, its appropriate inhabitants coyotes and horned toads slinking through the brush or sunning in the sand. Not that it was in reality too warm, not but that there was moisture and a liberal allotment of flora and fauna. It was the coloring and the season's accumulation of dust and the chameleonlike effort of every plant and animal to render itself inconspicuous by blending with the surroundings, that gave

THE INTERLOPERS

the young doctor this depressing impression, one that was possibly exaggerated by his mood at the moment. The habitations of the Cuyamacas were in harmony with nature. The walls were a dirty grey, the roofs a lifeless, greyish brown, the wood-work, whether casements or primitive farm implements, was destitute of any color save that produced by the merciless California sun, and the ground about was utterly bare, for it was soaked with dish-water and trampled with use until no vestige of grass, not so much as a clod of earth remained. Even the dried oak leaves of the ramada were the color of death; not a flower or a garden plant was there to bring relief.

There was little to offset this monotonous lack of color, and the only break in architectural regularity was the ramada. This was made with a light frame cut from comparatively straight limbs, and covered with oak leaves or willow branches. It was of the most flimsy construction possible, intended only to give protection from the sun. It was used in the summer as a covered porch would have been, and as an outdoor kitchen. It formed a cool retreat in the heat of the day, a fact appreciated no more by man than by the hordes of flies that were propagated in the filth surrounding the house. The first of the winter storms was expected to carry away the ramada when it cleaned the yard.

Of outside ornaments there were often none beyond a rattle trap buggy with an old set of harness

HOLLINGTON VISITS THE INDIANS

thrown across the dash, a tiny makeshift chicken coop, and an olla or two holding water or meal.

Within the house there was an insufferable feeling of crowding. For five people to occupy one room means not only congestion at night but also a stuffiness lasting through the day. Not more than one bed could be accommodated. Where five slept could only be conjectured, unless Billy Evans' surmise were accepted. He maintained that those who went to sleep first were carefully moved to the floor, one after another, until there came the last of the relay who kept the couch to himself. The bedstead was of iron only occasionally; usually it consisted of a wooden frame with twine or rawhide lacings to hold the blankets. The pieces of furniture were old boxes, used as tables, chairs or cupboards as size and shape determined. The stove and extra bedding were somehow crowded in, except in those rare cases where the camp fire was built on the floor, without chimney or fireplace. If any ornamenting or decorating was attempted at all, it would consist of some pictures cut from a magazine and pinned on the wall. The earthen floor, though regularly sprinkled, was so seldom cleaned that the accumulated filth had rendered it a paradise for vermin. In fact, everything about the dark interior was disgusting, from the dirty, ragged comforters to the smells that betrayed the total lack of sunshine.

It was to such homes as these that Dr. Hollington had undertaken to bring the latest principles of hygiene. The first Indian whom he went to see was

THE INTERLOPERS

Florenzino, policeman of the tribe. As Robert approached the hut to which he had been directed, the sight of a group of eight or ten Indians sheltered by their ramada or stretched out under neighboring trees gave him his first understanding of one essential difference between the minds of the white man and the red. To us a house is both home and shelter, to them it is but shelter, for they are still undomesticated and their real home is out of doors. So what would be intolerable crowding to one race is space abundant to the other.

A closer view showed four adults within the ramada. A young woman was peeling and slicing some native gourd, throwing the pieces into an iron pot; two other women and a man, all advanced in years, were seated facing her and each other. In the shadow of an old blue gum a mattress had been flung, on which lay a man not far past thirty. Several children from two to ten years of age flitted about at play. Excepting two nondescript dogs snapping at the flies and a thin old horse browsing to the very walls of the hut, theirs was the only motion in the picture, and that was slow, quiet and subdued.

When Hollington's approach was observed, the older children crowded within the group, and the younger ones disappeared into the hut. No other recognition was given him, not a word was spoken, not as much as a face was turned toward him, except by the children who stared stolidly. He advanced to the younger woman and spoke to her. She

HOLLINGTON VISITS THE INDIANS

paused in her work long enough to watch him while he asked for Florenzino, then slowly picked out another gourd and began to cut off the rind. Robert studied her for a moment, not knowing exactly how to construe her conduct nor what was next expected of him. Her hair was coarse and straight, the black braids were twisted across her forehead and fastened behind her head. Her complexion was so dark as to be between the African and the typical copper colored Indian; her features were coarse and heavy. Her nose was large, as broad as a negro's, but not flattened. Her eyes were jet black, soft and appealing, but neither in them nor on her face lay any expression whatsoever. Her mouth and chin were massive, as were the irregular teeth that showed through her parted lips. The table by which she was working obstructed the view of her figure; all that could be seen was a cumbersome blouse, spotted and faded but apparently clean.

Robert spoke to her again, and a second time she laid aside her work while he was talking. He patiently repeated his expression, explaining that he had come from Rosario especially to see Florenzino. When he had finished, the girl looked at him intently for a moment, then there flittered across her a face a smile that was almost a laugh, an expression that combined helplessness with superiority.

"No sabe," she said.

Robert, in desperation, turned toward the others, but they apparently were not even aware of his presence. There was nothing in the general atmos-

THE INTERLOPERS

phere to suggest hostility or studied rudeness, nor was there any reason to suspect a concerted effort to force him to leave; it was more as though he were struggling to accomplish something while those near by were scarcely watching him, were indifferent as to whether he should succeed or not. Then the persistent young man remembered the Indian schools, so he turned abruptly to the oldest child.

"Can you tell these people that the Great White Father sent me here to be their doctor, and that I want to see Florenzino?"

The little girl was too shy to answer, even if she understood. She turned to her mother, who was pouring water in the pot of sliced gourds, and the latter after perhaps half a minute of apparent contemplation, asked:

"You are the doctor?"

Her question was almost a monotone, what slight accent there was being on the verb. The voice was soft and far away, more in keeping with forests and running water than with her present sordid surroundings. She evinced no embarrassment over betraying a knowledge of English, for to her it was only natural and proper to show no interest unless there were some prospective benefit to herself. Unlike most primitive people she seemed to have no curiosity.

"Where is Florenzino?" Hollington was beginning to feel encouraged.

She pointed across the valley to something mov-

HOLLINGTON VISITS THE INDIANS

ing, which the easterner could barely distinguish as a small cloud of dust.

"He is coming," she said in the same level way.

Robert made no effort to continue the conversation while he was waiting. His attention wandered to the cooking and eating accessories, as far as he could see them from where he stood. The pots and pans, the china and the knives and forks and spoons were all the white man's products. They were pitifully few in number and of the coarsest and cheapest make. Then at his shoulder came the slow, deliberate voice that he was growing to like.

"I have a baby," it said.

"Where is it?"

Again came a pause that could be measured by fractions of a minute. "In the house."

"May I see it?"

Always the interval of silence, and then: "The baby is sick."

The doctor did not wait for persuasion, but walked into the hut, with the mother slowly following. On the bed lay a naked infant not more than six weeks old, whose wasted body and pitiful expression would have told anyone that it was dying. Malnutrition! that was all. An older child was sent to the store for condensed milk and other food, while Robert labored with the mother to make her understand just how to use the prescribed medicine. He took the pills from his case and made her administer them under his guidance.

Once he had occasion to step to the door to obtain

THE INTERLOPERS

a better light on the child's face. There sat the three old people, as placid as ever. They had surprised him by not crowding into the room when he first went to the baby, they shocked and angered him by not questioning the mother who stood by him on the threshold, or even trying to read some message on his face or hers. It was his first experience with their animal-like patience, the first time it was brought home to him that an hour or two makes no difference to them under any ordinary circumstances.

When he had finished his work and had come out of doors, Florenzino was waiting. The policeman was a splendid specimen of the physical Indian. Five feet ten inches in height, a hundred and ninety pounds in weight, with a massive head, immense torso and shoulders, arms of unusual length, hips so narrow that they hardly broke the straight line from shoulder to ankle, small hands and feet, and the poise of an athlete, such were Robert's first impressions. The four natives had been talking to each other in voices which had carried the short distance to where the baby lay. Their words were softer far than English would have been in the same mouths, for the Indian language seems to be an attempt to imitate the sounds of nature. If the wind be mentioned, or a bird or a stream, there is an effort to make the tones force the listener to visualize the picture.

Florenzino manifested none of the indifference that the others had shown. He recognized the importance to the tribe of proper medical care, and

HOLLINGTON VISITS THE INDIANS

he was perfectly willing to meet half way anything that promised to be for his own advantage. Furthermore, he gloried in the proffered opportunity to assume the parental role and to display his authority, for on him had fallen the mantle of the once powerful but now departed chiefs. Undoubtedly he had been interested in the conversation with his compatriots and he had proven that he was pleased to have Hollington present; yet his remarks, pithy though they were, resembled in marked degree those of his wife, for they were short, curt, and came only at intervals. The results were satisfactory to both men; the doctor told how he could be reached, what hours were most convenient, and under what circumstances he should be summoned, while Florenzino conveyed the impression that all the other Indians were his charges, that he was zealous in his care of them, and was in a position to exact implicit obedience.

One picture of the day left such a pleasant impression that Robert was glad to store it in his memory. It was of Carlotta, Florenzino's mother. She was seated in an open field, without cover or shelter of any kind, not even a shawl over her head. Before her was spread a canvas, on which had been thrown the freshly harvested beans. These had been crushed free from the pods, but pods, stalks, leaves and beans formed one pile together. The old lady held in her hand a flat, saucershaped basket of her own weave, which from time to time she half filled with beans and chaff, and then by throwing the con-

THE INTERLOPERS

tents a foot or so in the air, and deftly catching them again, she separated one from the other. Now and then a few vigorous shakes were necessary to bring to the surface the larger pieces of leaves or stems, but practically all the cleaning was done by the monotonous process of toss and catch. Through the long summer day she had worked incessantly, as was shown by the pile of chaff on her right, and on her left the large olla containing half a bushel or more of clean frijoles.

Acting on impulse, Robert crossed the field and spoke to her. Florenzino, following, explained the purposes of the visitor, so she smiled a welcome. Robert instinctively took off his hat, for he recognized the presence of an aristocrat. As old she was at fifty as are our women at eighty, wrinkled in face and bloated in body, squatting cross-legged with her knees touching her ankles and her stomach resting on her thighs, draped in the oldest, cheapest, most faded of cotton goods, yet there was in her bright black eyes, her straight delicate nose, her small shapely hands and the atmosphere with which she surrounded herself, something that made her personality superior to her environment. So strongly did like speak to like across the gap of breeding, language, and race that the whole Indian people rose in the doctor's estimation, and his first opinion that they were little better than beasts underwent a revision.

He mused on the situation as he went home, his first impressions battling with his last. Another

HOLLINGTON VISITS THE INDIANS

aspect obtruded itself, that while these people outnumbered the Japanese four or five to one, they were not, and never could become, such factors in the general economic life. And Hollington remembered stories he had heard from well informed persons about the Indian's selfishness and complete lack of gratitude. He knew these tales were true, and that he had set himself a hard task in trying to win from them a friendship that would be true.

CHAPTER XIII

FRANCES GOES TO SAN CLEMENTE

ONE evening, when Sam came in for supper he handed Frances a letter. The handwriting was unknown to her, so she carefully looked it over before opening an envelope that was addressed in a decidedly feminine hand and bore a slight trace of perfume.

"My Dear Miss Coulters:" she read. "You undoubtedly will be surprised by receiving this note from a total stranger. When I tell you however that Edward Winfield is my brother, you will readily understand that I have learned to regard you as an old friend, through hearing of the many lovely things you have done for him.

"He is very close to me, far more so than are most brothers to their sisters. I am anxious to meet the young lady who has more than once saved his life, he tells me, to meet her and to see if I cannot give her a little pleasure in return.

"I am at the Hotel San Clemente for the season. Some guests of mine are leaving the latter part of this month, so any time after the first I should be delighted if you would come down to visit me for three weeks. I live very quietly here, but I have been coming for years, and so know a great many people who will enjoy helping me give you a good time.

"Please do not disappoint me. If you are half as nice as Edward says you are, and he is pretty critical, I will be the one to derive most of the pleasure from your visit.

"I saw Edward in Denver. The doctors thought it best for me not to stay more than a day or two. He seems to be a little more than holding his own. I will tell you all about him when I see you.

"With the pleasantest anticipations,

Helen M. Charleton.

'P. S.—Do not be foolish about anything. Come!'

FRANCES GOES TO SAN CLEMENTE

"It's one of the loveliest letters I have ever had," said Frances, handing it to her mother, who read it aloud.

"This will be a splendid thing for you," said Mrs. Coulters.

"Mother, I can't possibly go."

"Why not?"

"Clothes, for one thing. My duties here for another."

"You haven't been a bit well, Frances. Your health is the most important consideration. We can make you the few simple dresses that are all that will be expected of you."

"No, mother, I don't want to go."

"But you must."

"Must?" said the father. "You surely aren't going to send the child against her will."

"Yes, I am. Her apathy is just an added reason. Do you think it natural for a girl of her age, raised as she has been, not to be wild with excitement over an opportunity like this? She needs change to break her lethargy and put red blood in her veins."

"I wash my hands of it; you two will have to settle the matter."

"Of course, I will go if mother really wants me to."

Mrs. Charleton, in her limousine, met the train that had brought Frances in from the country. It was a half hour's drive to the hotel, a half hour spent by Mrs. Charleton in putting at ease the shyest, sweetest bit of humanity she had ever known.

THE INTERLOPERS

Arriving at the hotel, they dressed for dinner. Frances apologized for her evening gown which, by the way, was the only one she had ever had.

"Never mind, my dear, your gown is simple, but you can wear it. You will see women in the dining room who would give anything on earth for a complexion like yours. Have you never used powder?"

"Shall I get some?"

"Heavens no, not with your skin. Let's go down stairs now. I don't like to keep the Weymouths."

"Are they to have supper with us?"

"We dine with them tonight."

This was the first of the series of formal dinners Frances attended. Their breakfasts were often served in their rooms; at noon she and Mrs. Charlton habitually sat alone, but not once did they do so in the evening.

Frances' frame was shaking with nervousness as she left the elevator for the initial meal. In the lobby she had to go through the ordeal of meeting her hosts and such of the guests as had arrived. She was glad that others joined them during the introductions, for in the confusion she lost some of her self-consciousness.

She had hardly had time to recuperate from the first feeling of awe before she found herself walking into the dining room, with Mr. Winslow on her left. There were couples in front, couples behind, as the file crossed the crowded room to a table under the windows. Not knowing what was expected of her Frances merely kept her place in the line. Look-

FRANCES GOES TO SAN CLEMENTE

ing about she saw the arched ceiling of a room such as her imagination had never conceived. It was as high as any house in Rosario, as large as any farmyard, decorated with a profusion of hanging lights and draperies and potted plants. There were on every table candelabra which served both to throw into shadows myriads of white gowned waitresses, and to illuminate the faces of the guests. The most of these, so it seemed to her, were hard, tired faces, the older critical, the younger supercilious.

"Why is it all are so solemn, Mrs. Winslow? People come to a pleasure resort to have a good time, yet I have scarcely seen a smile in all this crowd."

Winslow repeated this remark after their seats had been found and the party settled. Frances then heard some of the laughter she had missed, but she was not sorry, for there was no mistaking the good nature that admitted that the joke was on themselves. Still she felt that she must be careful, so she avoided the more or less general efforts to draw her out again.

She worked her way through the bewildering array of silver, and many other pitfalls, by the simple process of holding back to watch others. She herself spoke but seldom, yet she was a very easy person to talk to, as Winslow and Lieutenant Cutshaw, who also sat beside her, were not slow to discover. Everything was new to her, and she frankly showed her interest in whatever was being told.

The episode that most embarrassed Frances came

THE INTERLOPERS

at the outset with the caviar and the cocktails. Mrs. Charleton, covertly watching from across the table, saw Frances imitatively raise the glass, and realized with something of a shock that this young girl had never tasted liquor, perhaps had never seen anyone drink it. Though the elder woman herself was at a loss to know what to do, she did not shirk her obligation to help Frances through this dilemma.

"I wouldn't drink anything if I were you," Mrs. Charleton began blindly, trusting to tact and experience to bring her through. "You don't need the stimulant, so I will not allow you to lose any of your freshness while you are under my care." Frances put down her glass with a too transparent relief.

The long course dinner bewildered the country girl. The wine and the cordials, she could readily perceive, added to the gaiety of the party, and the cigarette smoking by members of her own sex was not at all confined to her own table. Such things were not for her; she would neither indulge in them nor pass criticism upon them.

After the demi-tasse they all went to the ball-room, and found comfortable seats behind the rail that separated the dancing floor from the spectators' gallery. Winslow at once took Frances out to one-step, wondering what kind of a partner he would have in this farmer's daughter. He did not attempt to conceal from her his pleasure when he found he was with one of the best natural dancers he had ever known. She could not follow his lead if he tried anything but the most conventional steps,

FRANCES GOES TO SAN CLEMENTE

the ones that Robert Hollington had taught her. But those she did exquisitely. Light as a feather in his arms, she had an ease, a grace, an intuitive knowledge of what he was about to do, that he had never before encountered in an amateur. Native ability coupled with an inborn love of the art could offset instruction and practice when carried to the point of satiety. Dragging tired feet through the same routine night after night under artificial stimulant stiffens muscles and collects a heavy tax on suppleness. Nor must it be forgotten that in Robert she had a teacher who had carried her far in the past year.

Long before the midnight closing Frances' fame had spread through the room. Mrs. Weymouth, proud of her guest, and Mrs. Charleton, who felt it no small honor to be cicerone to one of the best dancers the hotel had ever boasted, were besieged with requests for introductions. When the soft strains of "Home Sweet Home" echoed through the room, and she saw that the gathering of wraps and the preparations to leave had become general, Frances felt that there had come to a close one of the signal evenings of her life.

But a surprise lay in store for her. "We are going downstairs to the grill for a little while," said Mrs. Charleton. So down they went, to find themselves once more seated about a table. The Weymouths still were hosts, though the personnel of the party had undergone no little change through additions and deflections.

THE INTERLOPERS

A chance remark that Frances had overheard, while they were waiting for the refreshments, had thrown her into a brown study. Mrs. Weymouth was speaking to the retired general across the board:

"Have you noticed what a thoroughly nice crowd of young people there are at the San Clemente this season? A ballroom often strikes me as having a conglomerate face; sometimes that face repels, as do typical cabaret singers. More often it is humdrum and common, like the people on the streets. It is not often that it has appealed to me as strongly as it does tonight, reflecting the best of our American youth."

Winslow, who had not relinquished the rights that came with the fortunate chance by which he had first drawn her as a dinner partner, broke into her reverie:

"Now what direction are your thoughts taking?" he asked.

"If I tell you, you'll repeat it, and then you will all laugh at me."

"On my honor, I'll not tell a soul."

"I was just amusing myself thinking how much younger the people are getting as the evening grows older. When we went into the dining-room it seemed as though everyone were well on into middle age; in the ballroom people were lots younger, and now in the grill I don't feel like a child any more."

"There certainly is a different spirit here," said Winslow. "As you say, the older people are dropping out. But it's not that alone; upstairs is a sort

FRANCES GOES TO SAN CLEMENTE

of public place, downstairs we feel that it's all among ourselves, more like a club. Besides, everyone has been drinking all the evening, and naturally that makes a difference."

Frances shuddered.

"You little prude!" laughed Winslow. "If night after night you did any one thing, even your enthusiasm would be dulled in time. There is hardly anyone here who has had too much; a little to stir up the circulation may be bad for the health, but it is nothing to shock one. Here is that lieutenant again; he is beginning to become a nuisance."

The space in the grill reserved for dancing was limited. By the time a dozen tables had been put in position, and places found for a piano and the musicians, more than half of the room was gone. This intimate crowding of music, spectators, and dancers resulted in an informality which relieved Frances of the features of the evening which had oppressed her most, the style and hugeness of it all.

Every one of the hundred and more people in the room seemed to know every one else. They formed a cosmopolitan group, which owed its existence to the ease with which it absorbed the new comers that pleased it. Frances was well received on Mrs. Charleton's account at first, but afterwards on her own. The hours slipped by; it was after three when the festivities were ended by the refusal of the orchestra to be cajoled into playing any longer.

On the way to their rooms Mrs. Charleton slipped her arm about her guest.

THE INTERLOPERS

"I'm proud of you, little girl, proud of you in every way. You've made this an unusually pleasant evening for me."

"Have I really? It required so much of your attention to introduce me and watch over me that I'm afraid I've kept you from having a good time."

"That is what gave one to me. Besides, all my work was done when you met my friends; was there one of them who didn't come back for a second dance? I notice that you didn't miss once; you seemed to be engaged five or six deep most of the night."

Frances slept late that morning. She had been told that she was to breakfast alone, either in her room or downstairs as she chose. She decided, after some hesitation, that the dining room where she had already been was less terrifying than the unknown mysteries attending the summoning of a maid.

Her meal finished, she walked through the lobby, deserted by all but clerks and call boys, and then through the equally empty gardens. Everything was so large, herself so insignificantly small. Out into the ocean ran a pier; to the end of this she went. Again the proportions had to be adjusted. The Pacific was so immense, so unchanging and permanent, while the hotel grounds, the San Clemente itself with all it stood for and contained—

"The sky dwarfs the ocean too," she mused. "I won't moralize any more; I'm going to have as good a time as I can while I'm here, without giving another thought to what it all means."

FRANCES GOES TO SAN CLEMENTE

She was presently seated on the beach, watching, with the interest of an inland dweller, the huge breakers lazily rolling in, the sea fowl maintaining their vigilant patrol.

"Here's a great piece of luck." It was the cheerful voice of the lieutenant, who had so bothered Winslow the evening before. "How would you like to go up in the air?"

"What a dream!" Here eyes were on a gull that was gracefully circling a suspected movement in the water below.

"This is no dream. Did no one tell you that I'm an aviator?" Lieutenant Stone held out his hand. "Come, I'll take you for a ride. I particularly wanted a passenger this morning."

Frances was easily persuaded. Soon she was seated in the first aeroplane she had ever seen. With a terrific roar the propeller started to drive the plane; then suddenly the land began to fall away from beneath her. The next half hour was the most thrilling that she had ever spent. The sensation of motion was replaced with the illusion that she was suspended in space, while far beneath her a little model of the world slipped by in panorama, a little model that showed the roofs of houses, the tops of trees, the white crests of breakers, the decks of vessels.

On the way back from the hangars Stone talked of tennis and golf. Frances barely knew what he meant. She was still so excited from her ride that she could not keep her mind on what he was saying.

THE INTERLOPERS

Nevertheless, a curious little pang shot through her, a feeling that after all she was really not a part of this life came to her, as they were passed time and again by automobiles filled with men and women in golfing clothes, bound for the Country Club.

By the time the pair reached the hotel, Stone had extracted from Frances a promise to fly with him frequently, if Mrs. Charleton approved. That lady, when consulted, did object, but not so seriously as to prevent the making of another engagement.

Lieutenant Stone took Frances to the Country Club and explained some of the mysteries of golf. When they wearied of that they strayed over to the courts, where they watched the progress of a tennis tournament until it was time to meet Mrs. Charleton again.

At noon everyone was at the bath house. Frances had learned to swim in the reservoirs of Rosario, so she did not have to be a mere spectator here. Her stroke was a very natural one, easy and graceful. She tried it in the plunge, in the bay and in the ocean, and was delighted with the buoyancy of salt water. Among those who had helped close the grill in the early hours of the morning was Winslow, now giving a pretty exhibition of fancy diving. He took the girl in hand, initiated her into the mysteries of the spring board, the rings, and the slide. It was a curious commentary on human nature that she who had faced, without a tremor, the unknown dangers and dizzy heights of aeroplaning, was white

FRANCES GOES TO SAN CLEMENTE

with fear when first she looked down the slide and realized that she must force herself to use it.

Luncheon followed the bath. Mrs. Charleton and Frances were alone for the first time that day, and what a series of experiences and impressions the girl did have to relate. She easily allowed herself to be drawn out, while Mrs. Charleton, reveling in the naivete of the recital, didn't check it by disputing any point of view, or by showing amusement at comparisons with Eden Valley.

A polo game was scheduled between the local team and one from Riverside. So promptly at three o'clock these two, together with Mrs. Weymouth and Mrs. General Harris as guests, took their places in Mrs. Charleton's open car, and drove to a space reserved for them by the side of the playing field. On either side were other cars, filled with faces that were rapidly becoming familiar. There was a chattering back and forth, a promiscuous intermingling among the various parties, while the passing on foot of others added greatly to the confusion and the hilarity.

It was here that Frances conceived the idea which later, in the club house, grew upon her, that these people who had been so good to her, who were so cordial and hospitable among themselves, did not recognize any obligation to humanity in general. After the first period, instead of giving her attention to the game, for she saw little more in it than eight mounted men striking or missing a wooden ball, she fell to studying the people, amused to find

THE INTERLOPERS

that in less than twenty-four hours her awe of them had disappeared. She noticed that she herself was even becoming a little critical, wondering why certain persons had been taken in while others had been left out, trying to formulate in her mind some standard which must be met before one could be accepted.

Tea was served by the club immediately after the game. Here it was that the players mixed with the spectators, and with a few golf enthusiasts who would not desert their own game to attend another's. Frances watched the gorgeously gowned women group themselves at tables, either in the main room or on the veranda. She came to a conclusion, which she later verified, that even within the charmed circle of those who had passed, there were cliques and rings and fringes; also that one's position became more apparent in the tea room than elsewhere.

That evening Mrs. Charleton took her protégé to dinner on a battle-ship anchored in the harbor. Once again the girl became a sightseer, as willing guides took her the length and breadth of that great iron hull, down winding stairs or into turrets, until she had seen everything from the huge cannon to the jackies' mess. After dinner came dancing on a covered after deck, to the music of the fleet's band. The spell of the ocean was in the air, while on the open water of the bay twinkled the lights of the city and of passing ships.

Another day had passed, filled with pleasure, with never an idle moment nor a chance to be bored.

FRANCES GOES TO SAN CLEMENTE

So two crowded weeks slipped by, time enough in that shifting medley to make Frances one of the company. She had acquired the habit of sleeping till nearly noon; she had even been prevailed upon to use some of her hostess's clothes, which that thoughtful lady had altered slightly to suit. There had been moments of homesickness, and many times Frances had to remind herself of the resolution made that first morning on the pier. But she was having a happy time; how could she have helped it, who was rapidly becoming the belle of the San Clemente colony?

It was at luncheon that she was made to realize that after all life is a serious matter. She had been watching the Pacific, the friend who never tired her, while relating, in her fascinating way, details of the morning play. She had been asking, too, about the Pembertons, the great New York Pembertons, whose dinner-dance that evening was to be the event of the season.

Hardly aware that there had been a lull in her prattle, she was recalled by the voice of her hostess.

"How would you like to live with me permanently?"

Frances was too startled to reply.

"We'll not discuss it now." Though Mrs. Charlerton, to protect herself, had risen from the table, she still betrayed more feeling than Frances had ever seen in her. "Tomorrow you and I will breakfast in my room, and talk it over."

CHAPTER XIV

COULTERS GETS HIS LAND LAW

DIESTER had watched with grave concern the spread of Sam Coulters' propaganda. At first he had regarded the matter a good deal as had Rutherford White and the other professional politicians. The instinctive sensing of danger had been lulled by the crafty machinations of the San Diego boss, who had given assurance that Coulters was merely a country dreamer, without friends or backing or influence.

Diester's first move, after wakening to the seriousness of the situation, was to pass the word that this anti-Japanese agitation was to be belittled. Nothing kills novelty as easily as ridicule, so the skirmishers were thrown out to hold up Coulters and his followers to contumely. Here the machine met a stern rebuff, for it found the issue absolutely impersonal.

It has long been known that the public mind will not accept a new political or economic doctrine unless it has confidence in both the personnel and the motives of the men behind. If a candidate for office can prove that his opponents are grossly incompetent, actuated by the lowest passions, it is a sufficient answer, as has often been shown, to say that the accuser is bringing his charges because he is disgruntled or is the private enemy of the men he at-

COULTERS GETS HIS LAND LAW

tacks. It sounds absurd, yet its truth was so well known to Diester that he believed that a little personal attack upon Sam Coulters would end the whole agitation.

There was nothing to be gained in accusing Sam of dishonesty, drunkenness, or immorality, no use raking over his past life hoping to unearth a possible skeleton. What was done was to paint him as an ignorant rancher, presumptuously airing his individual grievances, trying to secure followers to right his private wrongs. They caricatured him as of over-weening conceit, of attempting to become a self-constituted leader, of whatever else their fancies suggested; and woke to find that they were not fighting him at all, that to reach him now was but to extinguish the match that had started the conflagration.

So Diester sent word down the line, to editor and legislator and local boss, that the anti-alien bill was undesirable. He knew better than to do this directly, for no one was more acutely aware than himself of the limitations of his position. When he found that insistence on his part would imperil his leadership he adroitly shifted his ground into the legislature itself. He checked over the hundred and twenty members of that body to find that he would have a substantial minority, some fifty strong, who would do his bidding. Some there were who were indifferent, some who blindly accepted his wishes as their laws, others who really believed that the hands off policy was best for the state. The past master in the gentle art of befuddling issues and dividing

THE INTERLOPERS

opposition could see no difficulty in the present situation.

When the lawmakers met in session they spent days in effecting organization, in the election of officers, in the appointment of committees, and the distribution of patronage. Bills were then introduced by the hundreds. Among those that went to the committees was the anti-alien land bill, introduced in each house. Soon reports on other prospective laws began to emerge from committee rooms, to be enacted or killed, almost at Diester's dictation, amidst drooling, almost interminable debate. There is a great contrast between the leisure of the opening days and the frantic scramble of the last week.

Gradually those measures upon which Diester wished to have action taken were being brought up for consideration. The ones that would not stand the light of publicity were held back to be rushed through in the closing days, when open debate and careful scrutiny were not possible. At that time there would be many which he would not desire to have passed, and yet which would be if they were voted upon. There were many others which would hurt his party if acted upon either way; these he habitually suppressed through parliamentary tricks or subservient conferences.

Such were his plans with regard to the alien land law, when he was visited by Tim Gilbert and Howard Smith, state senator and assemblyman respectively, and chairmen of the two committees which held Coulters' bill.

COULTERS GETS HIS LAND LAW

"Diester, Howard and I have got to report that damned Japanese law, and report it without a word being changed. We've just had a talk with the farmer who is lobbying for it, and promised."

"How did he bluff you into that?"

"It was no bluff. He told me that the papers of Fresno county, all of them, would print in full every step that was taken, that they would begin the day after tomorrow to hound me for not reporting that law, that if I twisted a single word that had been approved by the Fresno chamber of commerce, they would print in parallel the old and the new, and give their version of my reasons for shifting things. He told me all that, and proved it to me. Two members of my committee are pledged to him through thick and thin, so there is no way that I can dodge. It is strictly up to me. Howard is in bad enough, but as for me, why I could never go home again if I didn't lie down on you here."

"All right, report. How about you, Smith?"

"My committee is going to take this over my head anyway, and I want to be in the band-wagon. Coulters was with three men from my district when he looked me up; you know Charlie Steele and Bert Fink and Fred Skinner, big bugs of union labor. I hate to be a quitter, Diester, but what could I do?"

"So you promised, too?"

"Yes."

"Has this man Coulters brains enough to have worked this out by himself?"

"An awful smart man," commented Gilbert.

THE INTERLOPERS

"But it takes more than cleverness to do what he has done," objected Diester. "Experience and training are just as necessary to one of us as to a mechanic. You know the brightest man in the world couldn't pick up a saw and hammer for the first time and turn out a perfect piece of work. I wonder who is putting the workmanlike finish on everything Coulters does?"

"He is with Rutherford White a good deal," suggested Howard Smith.

"If I thought he was trying to double cross me, I would bust him so quickly—somehow," he said to himself, "I don't altogether trust that man. I believe I'll let Buddy Haynes have a try. Yes, I'll put Buddy Haynes in White's place for the sake of extra precaution."

The anti-Japanese agitation was a nuisance to Diester, for he couldn't possibly profit by it, while it might hurt him either way it turned out. In the meantime, his attention and strength were being deflected from matters which were of real importance. The months during which the legislature were in session were the busy ones of his existence. Into them were crowded the trades, the appointments, and the rewards that constituted his life work. Besieged as he was by nearly every member of either house, by the lobbyists and the reporters, by visiting politicians and attorneys, he couldn't turn individually to any one thing.

He had given to Coulters' bill all the time he could afford, and more. He had planned to have

COULTERS GETS HIS LAND LAW

it pass each house, but to have it pass in different forms. He had had prepared for the committee amendments which he knew would be acceptable to the sponsors of the alien land law, in fact, such acceptance had already been arranged. The result would have been that he would have had a house bill and a senate bill, in which case diplomacy and a conference committee of his own choosing would have been able to keep the factions apart until towards the close of the session. Then the whole thing could have been buried under the avalanche of last minute legislation.

Sam Coulters had defeated this plan by the simple, straightforward attack of threatened publicity. Diester had known better than to try to keep his underlings in line when they had no opportunity to evade direct responsibility, when their actions and motives would be given prompt and general circulation among their constituents. Some new plan might have been evolved in time, but time was an unobtainable asset. So Diester decided to throw the whole matter back on the federal managers. He sent a wire to them stating that the bill would be favorably reported within forty-eight hours, and probably passed at once.

He received a very laconic answer:—"We do not care how you kill that measure."

His reply was to admit his inability to do so. He begged them to accept it in its present form, or if that couldn't be done, to see if some compromise could not be arranged. Otherwise, all that they

THE INTERLOPERS

could do would be to use their power as they had done before. There followed quite an extensive interchange of telegrams, Washington ever demanding more and more details, even to the full text of the bill and the probable vote if one were had.

It is a far cry from Eden Valley to Pennsylvania Avenue, from the Rosario school to the White House. So we will not try to follow too closely the intricate manner in which the United States asked Japan if there was any objection on the part of the latter to this proposed California law, nor the wording of the prompt and forceful answer that there was. Deaf was Japan to all argument, to all counter proposals. "This is discrimination," she said, "and discrimination we will not tolerate."

Why it should have been a matter of such vast importance to our great republic that Japan should not be displeased, history does not reveal. Perhaps it was the fear of war, or perhaps because of possible interference with one of the complicated American diplomatic campaigns, which are pursued with just as much hope as though there were a chance of their bearing fruit, or possibly it was simply altruistic idealism.

Out of the chaos there finally emerged a plan; no less a personage than the secretary of state himself should cross the thousands of miles of plain and mountain that separated the golden state from the seat of government. He should reason with the California lawmakers, show them the error of their ways, and so impress them with his importance that

COULTERS GETS HIS LAND LAW

they would receive to their bosoms and lavish friendship upon their erstwhile enemies. This sacrifice of time and comfort by such a personage, purely to further the interests of and promote friendship with the island kingdom could not fail to win favor with the astute Japanese.

California was informed of the honor about to be conferred upon her, but not of the circumstances under which the plan was conceived, nor of the effect that the spectacle was having on the Oriental mind. There was to be no delay, the secretary was starting over night, so of course no decisive action was taken in Sacramento. Common politeness and respect for his exalted office demanded that he should be heard.

While the much heralded special was tearing across the continent, Coulters and White held many councils of war. So far their team play had been admirable. One or the other had been able to meet in brilliant fashion every contingency as it arose. But this happy faculty of supplementing each other held no promise of being able to cope with the menace that was speeding on from the east. Beyond securing promises of faithful support and grooming forceful speakers to answer the country's most famous orator, there was nothing that they could do to meet the unknown.

"I'm afraid it's as hopeless as ever, Sam," said White. "Diester is clever, he's something up his sleeve that's going to crush us flat as a shadow. You beat him in the state, and together we beat

THE INTERLOPERS

him in the capitol, but we beat him too easily. If he'd been in his last trench he'd have stopped us long ago."

"If talk could have checked me I wouldn't have tried at all," was Sam's answer. "There's no use becoming panicky just because we don't know from what direction the next blow is coming. Remember, it's just as foolish to credit your opponent with having too much strength as it is to underrate him. Perhaps Diester already has all his cards on the table."

"Run over in your mind how easily they plucked success from us the last time. They didn't even have to exert themselves. Compare our chances then and now. Sam, you remind me of a picture I once saw. It was of a bull who stood his ground while a cow and calf hurried to safety. With lowered head, bellowing, pawing, but never yielding an inch, he awaited his enemies, shadowy, slinking, wolflike forms among the forest trees. That bull was doomed, of course, but he was not worrying about that, nor wondering if he'd be better off somewhere else. To stay there and fight was his nature just as it's yours."

"You are a grand pessimist, White, you didn't see the end of that picture. Perhaps the bull did win."

White laughed. "You miss my point," he said. "By the way, I meant to tell you that I have it straight that Diester is planning to oust me as soon as he can, so this is getting as serious for me as it is for you."

COULTERS GETS HIS LAND LAW

"Are you sure? How did you learn?"

"One of his men told me. Treachery, of course. You can trust no one but yourself in this game."

"Do you think he knows you've been helping me?"

"No. He's following out his usual policy; he's chopping off my head because he thinks some day I might challenge him for state leadership."

"About as low down—"

"Self-preservation, Sam. I've done the same thing half a dozen times."

A conversation such as this between these men had none of the snap or fire of the days when they had been campaigning. They were clearly marking time now, awaiting the secretary, from whom they were to learn their fate. The great one's progress across the nation was heralded in the papers, the time of his arrival was known to the minute. Committees to meet and entertain him were chosen, so that California's reputation for hospitality should be sustained.

A representative delegation met the special train near the crest of the Sierra at the state line. The secretary was all smiles and warmth, his remarks covered a world-wide range of general interest, almost no topic seemed barred, except the particular one that had brought him from Washington. Neither the reception committee nor the newspapermen could elicit a single word that related to things Japanese. At the station was a military band, a horde of officials headed by the governor, and half

THE INTERLOPERS

of the city's idlers. Geniality radiated from the visitor when he alighted from his train, but still he maintained secrecy about his mission. So matters stood when the stage was set, when both houses met in joint session to hear the speech of their august guest.

Coulters and White, from the spectators' gallery, saw the secretary take his place upon the platform, listened to the introduction by the governor, and joined in the applause which greeted the orator of the occasion when he rose to his feet. Now at last the veil of mystery was to be withdrawn, and every one was to know the trump card which Japan was about to play to defeat undesirable legislation.

White was visibly impressed by the pageant. "It doesn't stand to reason that this act would have been performed had there been any doubt as to the outcome. Do you realize that to win we not only have to dethrone Diester, we actually have to take away this man's portfolio? He can't remain long in the cabinet if he fails here. Do you think he would risk his political life on an uncertainty?"

"Neither would the wolves take chances, yet I believe that in some way the old bull beat them off." Sam's words were drowned in the applause that came when the secretary rose to speak.

"Well, it's all over," said White dejectedly, as the silvery voice that had won conventions and charmed multitudes began its expected praise of Californians in general and those present in particular. Followed a eulogy of the United States, a

COULTERS GETS HIS LAND LAW

panegyric of Japan, an appeal to the charity and forbearance of his hearers, for the acceptance by them of the yellow men who should be the objects of their solicitous care rather than their enmity.

"If he can talk nonsense as convincingly as this," said White, "what's going to happen when he has something to say?"

The secretary was preaching; "Love one another," was the text. When he felt that his audience was won to his point of view, he opened a sheepskin law book, from which he read extracts of the California state constitution, and proceeded to prove conclusively that the proposed law would be illegal.

"There it is at last," said White. Even the optimistic rancher felt the coming of the end. "How is it possible that Chandler Young was so far wrong? A child could see that our bill is unconstitutional. Look at Brenton," cried Sam suddenly, "he is not supposed to speak yet." Rutherford White, as well as everyone else in the room, was watching the young senator from Santa Barbara, the acknowledged champion of the bill.

Brenton was on his feet, trying to catch the eye of the speaker. When the secretary, pausing at the end of a rounded period, noticed this, he stopped perplexedly, and looked at Brenton inquiringly.

"Will you pardon an interruption?"

"Of course!" The answer, though forced, was gracious.

Sam groaned, his tired head dropped on his chest.

THE INTERLOPERS

Brenton was going to surrender; there was nothing else he could do. White reached out for the rancher's weather beaten hand, and pressed it warmly.

"You fought a good fight, you've nothing to regret. You led your forlorn hope to the gates of hell, even if you didn't get through. Listen—"

"Mr. Secretary, I know you will pardon me," Brenton's clear voice filled the room, "for calling your attention to the fact that through an oversight you are reading from an old text book. Every constitutional provision you have quoted has been repealed."

The next day a bill prohibiting the ownership of land by any aliens not eligible to citizenship, or the leasing by them for a period of more than three years, was unanimously passed by both branches of the legislature, and signed by the governor.

CHAPTER XV

THE JAPANESE PUPILS RETURN

DONALD SCOTT had arrived at a decision, an event comparable only to the adoption by the ordinary mind of some new principle. Certain ceremonies had to be observed before there could be any change in the course of conduct previously outlined by that orderly brain, overpowering influences were necessary to induce the new chain of thought and a plentitude of time must be devoted to a search for concealed drawbacks. Even then Donald became the butt of circumstances with a shamefaced feeling of weakness.

On this particular occasion initiative had come from the great freeze while action had been induced by the necessity of eating. He couldn't live for two years without income, and the only feasible way for him to secure it was from his land. So some months after his neighbors were doing the same thing, he made preparations to plant between the rows of his defunct trees. He found it difficult to determine what to grow, for the mental attitude of being shoved and forced was not congenial to him.

Watermelons and canteloupe required a light, sandy soil while his was a heavy adobe, so they were disregarded. Tomatoes were tempting, for the yield might be large and the price even up to eight cents. On the other hand, they were a gambler's

THE INTERLOPERS

choice, so delicate as to be easily lost, so uncertain of market as often to be worth less than the harvesting cost. Donald was by no means a devotee of the goddess of chance, nor would he have been justified, under the special circumstances which demanded a safe, sure living for two years, in risking anything on the possibility of catching conditions just right.

Strawberries, too, were considered, corn, cabbages, and carrots were discarded, and the lowly potato finally chosen.

Once settled, the growing of potatoes was adopted into Donald's life and given all the privileges of his other established habits. The seed was bought and spread damp in the cellar to sprout. The small shoots springing from the eyes were cut away with a generous piece of bulb attached, were planted in hills and rows, and were carefully watered, cultivated, and weeded. From this work Donald Scott sought rest and recreation only in his church and his school.

So far the cleverest of the school trustees was he, so much the most interested and experienced, that meetings of the board did little more than register his will. In the same ponderous way that he governed himself he attended to education in Rosario. He seldom was creative, even less often was he in error, and never would he allow himself to be hurried.

To him of all men fell the duty of acting on a communication that was like an unwelcome wind in

THE JAPANESE PUPILS RETURN

what was to have been a short and formal meeting. Unsuspectingly Donald opened, along with the routine mail, an official envelope containing three inoffensive looking sheets.

"Sacramento, Cal.

"To the Trustees of
The Eden Valley School,
Rosario, Cal.

"It has been brought to the attention of this office that three Japanese students in your school, Hogo, Watsa, and Nanga by name, have been virtually expelled without the filing of charges or the hearing to which they are entitled under the laws of the State of California. We enclose a copy of our correspondence with Dr. Hollington, which in our judgment is ample proof of our statement. We understand that there are several other Japanese who wish to attend the school but are not allowed to do so. The California State Board of Education has ordered me to inform you that until the above irregularity is properly attended to, or satisfactorily explained, it will be unable to disburse your allotment of State funds.

Very sincerely yours,

H. J. Williams,
Sec'y C. S. B. E."

Donald started reading this letter in a sing-song voice which changed to one with some expression before he had finished. Mechanically, and because in any emergency he would naturally spar for time, without making any comment he picked up the enclosures and read them aloud.

"Sacramento, Cal.

"To Dr. R. N. Hollington,
Rosario, Cal.

"Dear Sir:—

"I have been requested to write to you for information regarding the dropping from the Rosario school of the Japanese boys, Hogo, Watsa and Nanga. We are anxious to ascertain what formalities were observed, as well as the reasons which prompted this action.

"Thanking you for any information,

Very sincerely,

H. J. Williams,
Sec'y C. S. B. E.

THE INTERLOPERS

"Rosario, Cal.

"H. J. Williams, Esq.,
Sec'y California State Board of Education,
Sacramento, Cal.

"Dear Sir:—

"Replying to yours of recent date, I can only say that I have very little personal knowledge on the points you mention. It is commonly known that the action you refer to was taken because the parents of the girls in the school were unwilling to have their daughters associate with the Japanese. The trustees, I know, were sorry for the boys themselves, and what they did was purely for the best interests of the school and a register of popular will. As far as I am aware there were no formalities beyond informing the Japanese that they were no longer to come."

Yours truly,

Robert N. Hollington, M. D."

The three trustees looked at each other in some concern. Sanford, the junior member who had taken Warner's place, was the first to speak.

"I wonder why Hollington wanted to stir up this matter?"

Scott, careful as ever, would not jump at conclusions.

"All he did was to write a truthful reply to a letter. Let us think this thing over a little."

"If you had two girls in that school you wouldn't be so cool about it," said Henry Tower. "Everybody knows that the doctor has been a friend of those Japanese. I believe he put them up to this."

"It's more likely," said Scott, "that the boys have talked to their consul. Then the matter would go to Washington, for they've a habit of starting at the top and pressing down. I wouldn't be surprised if someone were squeezing the state board twice as hard as it's squeezing us."

"All the same," said Sanford, "there's no reason

THE JAPANESE PUPILS RETURN

why the doctor should have written that letter. If he had answered at all, which he didn't have to do, he could have said that he knew nothing beyond talk that he had heard."

"I would like to ask him—" began Donald.

"I can tell you just what he would say," snapped Tower. "He would put on his holier than thou expression, and ask why we object to what he wrote, since it's true. He would practically throw it back to us that we were afraid of having the truth told."

"He wouldn't be so blunt as that," Sanford has the appearance of trying to be fair. "But it's true that he doesn't recognize the borderland of expediency that lies between right and wrong."

"Long words never settled anything. Let's decide what we are going to do about this school money. We must either have it or else close the school. We might as well face the fact that the only way to keep open is to reinstate those Japs."

"We might do that and then expel them regularly," said Sanford.

"Or we might give them a separate room and a special corner of the playground," was Tower's idea.

"Yes, or try a half dozen other things, as was done in San Francisco. The trouble is that nothing that discriminates in the least will satisfy the Japanese ambassador. He doesn't care whether we close the school or not, nor how we run it. He is not interested in getting an education for those boys. His theory, as I see it, is that any discrimination,

THE INTERLOPERS

no matter how trivial, would be an entering wedge for all the race hatred in the state, so he stands firmly on his record that he will not tolerate anything. He has to stop somewhere; the safest and easiest place to stop is at the beginning. It is all simple if you have a powerful central government, like the one in Washington, which is so afraid, or so indifferent, or both, that it will practically take orders from a foreign power."

"You are not fair to Washington," Tower, a staunch supporter of the party in power, never overlooked an opportunity to justify its every act. He was cut short by Sanford, with a curt request to keep politics out of the meeting.

Donald continued his remarks. "The schools in San Francisco tried everything possible without making any headway. They went farther than we could go, offering special schools and teachers. But the Japanese government said no, its ambassador said no, our federal government echoed no, so did the state government and its board of education. Now that the same process is being tried on us we are going to do as San Francisco did, take a long breath, shut our eyes, and swallow the dose."

"Is there no way we can save our faces?" asked Sanford.

"There is nothing to do, except to rescind our action on—"

"I will not consent. My girls are not going where they will have to associate with grown men, above all with men, like these yellow Asiatics."

THE JAPANESE PUPILS RETURN

"What would you do? The alternative is to close the school."

"Then close it. Let the people of this state learn that Rosarians will not allow their women to be contaminated. Let them see us, with our schools empty and our children missing their education, sacrificing ourselves to our principles, and there would be pressure enough brought on that board of education to get us our money."

"But it doesn't matter what the board wants to do if Donald's ideas are correct, which I believe to be the case. Somewhere at a desk in Washington a Japanese attaché and a third or fourth assistant secretary of state would be seated. The former with his thumb on the list would be saying: 'Here is number seventeen, about the Rosario matter.' The American would run down his paper and answer: 'The school has been closed indefinitely.' 'Closed to all?' the attaché would ask. 'That is perfectly satisfactory. Now case eighteen—' and that is all the excitement you would create by trying to be a martyr."

"Be reasonable, Henry. If you don't want your girls to go to this school keep them away. You don't have to close the school to do that; depriving all of the boys and most of the girls of this valley of an education isn't going to help your children at all. We're here as trustees—" Donald stopped abruptly, uneasy at the change in Tower's expression.

"Donald," said Tower, "I know what you and

THE INTERLOPERS

Sanford are about to do, but I'll not be a party to it. I'm fair enough to recognize that there's no choice but to go on, so I'll not sit here to vote against you." He rose reluctantly to his feet. "I've been a trustee longer than either of you, ever since my girls went to kindergarten, and during those ten years I've always voted according to my conscience. To-day, either way I vote will be against it, and so" he looked at his fellow trustees an instant, his hands trembled a little as he reached for his hat, then he resolutely put it on and finished in a firm, even voice, "I resign."

Henry Tower seemed years older as he walked down the school steps and crossed the empty grounds. The sun was hot, the air unpleasantly dry, the wind blew an irritating dust into his nostrils. Eden Valley was desolate, the orchards were but stumps, its people were engaged in hopeless contest with conditions. His party in Washington had surely erred in this case; Hollington was to blame; Edith and Virginia must be educated, yet they could not be sent to the Rosario school. He himself had nothing to show for his last fifteen years of gruelling work; of a truth Henry Tower had the blues.

His house was a five room frame cottage, close and stuffy and dark, saturated with the odor of cooking just now, for Mrs. Tower, preparing supper, could not close the kitchen door. She was surprised and somewhat worried that he should come into the

THE JAPANESE PUPILS RETURN

house before the meal time, to sit in idleness waiting for her. She was too busy to more than perfunctorily ask if he were sick, but she was relieved later to see him eat a substantial meal. After it was finished she told the girls to do the dishes, and taking a seat close to him drew from him the story of his troubles.

He tried to be truthful in the matter, and probably would have been so but for his abnormal frame of mind. He did not intentionally exaggerate Hollington's part in the affair, and yet, because he was bitter he said more than he meant. He was careless and unfortunate, too, in his choice of words; so on the whole he produced in Mrs. Tower's mind an impression at variance with the facts. When he tried to retrieve himself, she could see that under the spell of the fascinating doctor he was taking the other's part, and so the effort had an effect quite the opposite of what was intended.

The husband was the first to weary of the talk. "After all," he said, "it's not so much a question of who's to blame as it is of what we're going to do. There'll be five of those Japs in school by Monday; I expect to see as many more in time. It makes me sick to think of sending Edith and Virginia there."

"You can't do so, you shall not!"

"They have to have their schooling, mother."

"Boarding school for them would cost us a thousand dollars a year."

THE INTERLOPERS

"I wish we could, but—"

"Yes, I know, Henry, what can we do?"

"Sell out and move away is the only thing I can see."

"Who would buy? Where could we go? What could we do?"

"Well?"

"I don't want to leave Rosario. Every spot in this valley has memories; some of them are pleasant; they recall the years we have spent here together, and those have been happy years. Some are just part of our lives, yours and mine, and those of our friends that are gone as well as those that remain; some are sacred, those two graves on the hillside. I simply cannot go away."

"Nor can I, but there's no alternative."

"What can you do for a living?"

"I used to be a pretty good carpenter."

"But it's fifteen years since you worked at your trade."

"I built an extra room for you last spring. I remember how pleased I was to find I had forgotten so little."

"But you must have become slower, from being out of practice so long. Besides, even if you've not forgotten, you've not kept up with what the other carpenters have learned since we came here."

"Even if I've to begin as helper, and be a second rate man, I'll make a living for you in some way."

"Who would buy this place now?"

THE JAPANESE PUPILS RETURN

"Hanba. He has a small standing offer for each farm in the valley. He probably has it figured out that every once in a while some of us will become so discouraged as to cash in for a fifth of what we should receive. So long as no one else will buy he is sure to pick up places by such means as fast as he wants them, and at a low cost. It's a winning game for him, as our case shows. If we couldn't sell at all we would have to stick it out. As it is he has put us in such a hole that we have to go away, and just about give him our place when we do."

After Tower had left the meeting, Scott and Sanford, hurrying through the routine necessary to reinstate the Japanese, adjourned as soon as they had written the state board that its demands had been met. Donald went directly home to tell Dorothy Tibbetts about the action that had been taken. He found Bessie with her, the housewife sewing while the teacher checked countless attempts at long division. With an unpleasant task to perform, which he was determined to put behind him as soon as possible, Donald plunged at once into the subject. He, too, told of Hollington's letter, but he treated of it lightly, besides which the minds of both of his hearers were centered upon the effects that the return of the Japanese was to have upon the school.

Dorothy accepted the change with a coolness that was surprising. "If they are coming I shall have to teach them," she said. "There can be no blame attached to any of us. And they are such good students."

THE INTERLOPERS

"You are a brave girl to take it that way," said Bessie. "Donald, you must see to it that she is protected, that people do not make a scapegoat of her."

"How many do you think there will be?" asked Dorothy.

"Anywhere from six to ten, and more if things in this valley go on as they have been going."

"What shall I do with them, treat them as I did before?"

"There must be ways by which we can help you avoid some of the troubles," said Mrs. Scott.

"Inside the school building we cannot help her, for the state board will allow no discrimination. Her judgment is better than ours when it comes to teaching."

"She might seat them so that they are as far as possible from the girls, and then have all the boys remain in a room until all the girls have left."

"Do you think it necessary?" asked Dorothy.

"I believe it would make a good impression on the mothers."

"Then divide the playground," said Donald. "One part for the girls and the boys up to fifteen, the other for boys of sixteen or older. Do not ever allow any of them to cross into each other's space, and you will have avoided another pitfall."

"And on the way to and from school?" asked Dorothy.

"Make it a rule that no boy is ever to walk with any girl if her mother objects, and then assume that

THE JAPANESE PUPILS RETURN

every mother objects to a Japanese escort. Will you do all this, Dorothy?"

"I hate to be rude to those boys, for I always feel so sorry for them. But if you think it best, Mr. Scott, I will do as you have said."

CHAPTER XVI

THE DANCE IN SAN CLEMENTE

MRS. PEMBERTON was in her glory, for this night all San Clemente did her homage. The banquet hall had been re-decorated to her taste, special dishes prepared at her directions, wines brought from her New York cellars. In her honor the fleet admiral had detailed the bands of two flagships; in every way preparations were lavish and complete.

At eight o'clock the Pembertons took their place in the reception hall. In the background were potted palms; beside their hosts, on their first trip to the coast, stood the Boston Dudleys, the guests of honor.

By twos and threes the guests arrived, filling the room with the elect of half a dozen cities. Hardly a gown that had not been especially imported for the occasion, hardly a family jewel that was not on display. The tinsel of uniforms glittered among masterpieces of the hairdressers' art; men and women alike showed the studied effects of being groomed with extreme care. Some there were who had traveled from afar to be present, and more than one saw in the affair the culmination of years of work and scheming.

The stream was continuous for fifty or sixty arrivals, until one more guest only was expected. The

THE DANCE IN SAN CLEMENTE

receiving line was about to break, when Robert Hollington entered.

"I hope I'm not late, Mrs. Pemberton. I was unfortunately delayed."

"I forgive you, Robert, but I never would have done so if you had failed me. You remember my husband, of course. I want you to met Mr. and Mrs. Dudley of Boston; you have often heard me speak of Dr. Hollington. I have only a moment now, Robert, but tell me about yourself, what are you doing?"

"Practicing medicine in the country?"

"It wasn't a bit nice of you to desert us the way you did. I always could dance better with you than anyone else. I want you to be especially attentive to me tonight, and I'll reward you in advance by giving you for a dinner partner the belle of San Clemente. Come with me. She is standing by Mrs. Charleton behind that fat General Harris."

He followed her through knots of people, until she stopped before one of the most attractive middle-aged woman Robert had ever seen.

"I want to introduce Dr. Hollington, Mrs. Charleton, and your dinner partner, Miss Coulters."

It came about so suddenly, so without warning, that poor Frances, untrained to meet exigencies of this nature, was at a loss to know how to conduct herself.

"Miss Coulters and I are old friends." Robert saved her by playing his part without a perceptible check. "I had heard that you were in San Diego,"

THE INTERLOPERS

he continued, "but it is certainly an unexpected pleasure to meet you here."

"Are you going to be down long?" Frances was taking the cue. Both she and Robert were relieved that Mrs. Charleton saw no reason for remaining and moved away when her escort came to claim her attention.

"I have to rush home the first thing in the morning. I would not have left for anyone but Mrs. Pemberton, but I owe her such a debt of obligation that I could not refuse. The situation is unfortunate. If I had had a suspicion that you would have been made uncomfortable, I would assuredly not have come. For the sake of the others, you understand, we simply have to carry out the evening. I will make it as easy for you as I can. Tell me about Mrs. Charleton, it seems to me I've heard of her. She is from Chicago, is she not?"

"Yes, she's Mr. Winfield's sister."

"Of course, I remember now having heard him speak of her. I see that the people are going into the other room, we had better find our places at the table."

Cutshaw was to sit beside Frances. She introduced Robert to him and also to Mrs. Porter. Miss Grenville and Winslow were on Robert's left, he had known both of them before. Beyond these immediate neighbors it was hopeless to give much attention to others. A temporary respite came while everyone was standing by his chair, but when the confusion attending the seating of so large an assem-

THE DANCE IN SAN CLEMENTE

blage had been abated, Robert felt that he must continue to talk to Frances.

"We were speaking of Mrs. Charleton. Are you staying with her?"

"Yes. She invited me to visit her for three weeks."

"Is she as lovely as she looks?" Robert had said they must go on, but he was losing confidence in himself. Could he not force some other thought into his mind than bits of gossip he had overheard coupling her name with Winfield's?

"She's a perfect dear. I didn't know that anyone could be so charming."

The first course over, strains of music came from the adjoining room. All the younger and some of the older people were rising.

"They are playing *Twilight in the Rose Garden*," murmured Frances. It was a piece once dear to the hearts of both, the old favorite that carried memories of happy Rosario days.

"Shall we dance?" Robert was surprised at the change in his feelings. Was it the music, or was he imagining, in spite of himself, that some meaning lay behind the tone of her last remark?

Never had these two had such a dance. The thoughts Robert could not put in words he tried to tell through the medium of the song. With her once more in his arms, with every movement of her lithe body responding to his will, care and trouble and sorrow dropped away. She was his; he was holding her now against all the world. His every step and

THE INTERLOPERS

movement must make her understand that he was her protector. Her answer was to nestle against him, to forget past and future. Not because of the practice she had been having, not because of the difference between this music and a country band, but because she was a woman and he had won her, did they dance into utter forgetfulness of any existence outside of themselves.

Little did they know that they had become conspicuous, that some telepathy was crowding the doorway, was lining the walls, with couples dropping out to watch. The leader of the orchestra was one of the first to sense the unusual. He outdid himself to force from the instruments the rhythm and inflection that would support them as he wanted. He played one repeat after another, as long as he dared, before he ended the scene in a series of resonant chords.

Of all the comments that were made, perhaps the one most worthy of mention came from the count de Montigny with a series of Gallic shrugs:

"Mais zese is a wonderful people. All ze aristocracy is here, yet ze farmer's daughter and ze country doctor, zey outshine zem all. Everywhere haf I been to balls, nevaire hafe I seen such dancing, such temperament. Zey haf ze soul of great artistes, ze farmer's daughter and ze country doctor. I am glad I came to ze America."

Frances and Robert, back from the clouds, were astounded to find themselves surrounded by admir-

THE DANCE IN SAN CLEMENTE

ers who insisted on congratulating them. Mrs. Pemberton broke through:

"You must give an encore, with the floor all to yourselves. I never dreamed that either of you, that anyone, could dance like that."

They were deaf to all appeals. Both knew that the waltz had been a supreme effort which could not again be approximated.

At the table once more it became of greater importance than ever to keep up appearances.

"You were telling me of Mrs. Charleton."

"Yes. She has just asked me to live with her permanently."

The bottom dropped out. Robert made no further effort, his limit had been reached. When the music started again he danced perfunctorily with Miss Grenville, and afterward with Mrs. Porter. He chatted with the others seated near him, and left his place a number of times to speak to old friends. But he knew he was only procrastinating. Even when he began to fear that the silence between himself and Frances might be noticed, he knew he could not do his part.

"Tell me about the people here." He was clearly shirking. "I know only a few."

"I'm beginning to distinguish types." Frances was willing to tell him of her impressions, for she knew she wouldn't be misjudged. "At the top of the list is the married flirt. She has a new beau every few months, desperately plays at love with him until she drops him for another. Can you un-

THE INTERLOPERS

derstand what any of them get out of it? Then there is the discontented woman. She is usually about forty, too young to be reconciled to her years, and too old to receive the attention that she once commanded. She usually tries to force popularity by excessive entertaining. There is the restless woman. Her mind is often on other things than men, but she has to be doing something every minute, as though afraid to be alone with her thoughts. There is the complacent woman. Her children are the smartest in the world, her household the most perfectly managed, her conversation and interests limited to those two subjects. There is the self-centered woman. Every discussion that is started, no matter how foreign, she brings back to her husband, herself or her clothes. There is—"

She was interrupted here by Winslow claiming a one-step. Robert went to do his duty toward Mrs. Pemberton. The meal was finished now, so the dancers were not returning to their seats, and Robert could find no further excuse for forcing his attentions on Frances. Even the ordinary obligation to ask her to go on the floor again was relieved by the sensation of their first appearance.

From that point the evening dragged interminably. A duty lay before him, that of helping others to enjoy themselves. It was not a pleasure, it was hard work, work which he performed faithfully until the break of day. Hour after hour he hewed to the line, dancing, talking or laughing, but ever watching Frances, the belle of the evening, usually

THE DANCE IN SAN CLEMENTE

surrounded by men clamoring for recognition. And the hardest struggle of all came at the end, when he started home without even a word of farewell from her.

Breakfast that day was late in Mrs. Charleton's room. The eggs, the bacon, the toast, the coffee, were disposed of in silence, broken only by scattered remarks. Not until the trays were put aside did they speak of the matter that weighed on their minds.

"I asked you yesterday how you would like to live with me permanently?"

"And you promised to tell me all about it in the morning."

"I have enjoyed so much having you with me that I want you to stay."

"You mean to work for you?"

"Not at all, you'll be even more a daughter to me than you have been, and I shall insist that my friends so recognize you."

"I could imagine nothing more lovely than having you for a mother."

"We would spend part of our time living as we have lived here, part of it not very differently in Chicago. Travel would account for most of the rest."

"You are wonderfully kind to offer that to me—"

"I am not kind at all, it's unadulterated selfishness. I have been contented the past fortnight. I have drawn a fund of pleasure out of this monotonous existence because I'd an object, that of pleas-

THE INTERLOPERS

ing you, and because you satisfied my mother love."

"You surely know hundreds of girls much better qualified than I."

"Not one, Frances, not one who would do at all. I know, for this idea is not new. You are unspoiled, unselfish, and enthusiastic, and not the least bit cynical. Do you think that any girl could be brought among these people and retain those qualities?"

"But think of their education, training and experience, the advantages they have had."

"I know that the world values those things very highly, and so do I. But after all character is the first consideration. Anyway, I'm not in search of abstract qualities. I want the person who pleases me. As long as you do that, let's not delve too deeply into the why."

"Do you really want me to live with you?"

"I do, more than you would imagine. I'm getting but little pleasure out of life; mine is too empty. If I had ever stopped to analyze motives I suppose I would have to admit that I had this idea in mind when I first asked you to come. I may have had it in mind every time I have had girls visiting me. I will make you happy. I will develop you—"

"There is no question of that."

"You will travel, you will study, you will associate with the best people and come in contact with the cleverest. You will have clothes and spending money—"

"I can picture a charming existence. What am I to do in return, what can I do?"

THE DANCE IN SAN CLEMENTE

"Do? Just what you've been doing. Be my daughter."

"But I've a mother in Rosario, and a father and a sister."

"Please do not begin with objections. It's time you were dressing for the plunge. Go down there, do the things you have been doing; picture it to yourself, not as something in which you have been dabbling, but as your life. Then take time to weigh the matter."

"Poor Edward," said Mrs. Charleton to herself, when the girl was gone, "and poor me. I know she's not for him, and as for me, I'm afraid. It is tragic that the one girl I want is the only one I've ever met who would hesitate at such an opportunity."

In the water once more, with the same people. But Frances was thinking now. Gone was the resolution of the pier, gone too her acceptance of conditions. She fell to studying people, especially her own sex. She compared herself with the girls, she compared her mother with the women. With the cold reasoning power that was her heritage from her father she arrived at the fundamental truth that as this was a life of pleasure it could be justified only if it brought happiness.

That it did so to the debutantes, even to the younger married set, was obvious. But hardly a woman past thirty-five but was discontented. Would she herself, starting so much later and so much fresher, last longer? Could she find some substantial basis on which she could progress from this stag-

THE INTERLOPERS

nation? There was still another alternative. She could join Mrs. Charleton, she could draw all that society could give, then, when satiated, could abandon it all. It was a dangerous game to play. She knew, in a vague way, something of the grip with which a drug could take hold of one. She recognized the parallel, for already she was coming under the spell of being on the inside, of regarding one's self and of being regarded as better than the rest of the world, of being sought after and entertained, and of being envied by outsiders.

It is often said that women cannot reason. This old slander might contain some truth if it were amplified to contain the idea that she can reason and does, but after having done so, disregards premises and postulates to follow her own will. Nothing could have been more feminine than for Frances to spend days studying the subject, weighing all sides as her father would have done, and yet be unwilling to abide by the result.

She gave her decision a few days before the visit was to expire. She thanked Mrs. Charleton, she even cried a bit, and so did the elder woman. Frances tried to give reasons for returning to Rosario, but she couldn't make them sound convincing, even to herself, for reason was all on the other side.

"I'll not attempt to argue the matter," Mrs. Charleton had not spoken until Frances was talked out. "You've made up your mind. If I remind you that the offer will always be open I do so without

THE DANCE IN SAN CLEMENTE

hope. I've learned to know you. By the way, you've heard that Winslow is going east Saturday?"

"Yes," Frances showed her surprise at the question.

"Did you know that he started to make his arrangements the morning after the Pemberton's ball?"

"I understood that he had decided only yesterday. What do you ask?"

"Did you consider, in balancing the pros and cons, that if you came to me you would undoubtedly marry into this set, one of these days?"

"I'd not thought about it particularly."

"But you know that it's so?"

"I'm utterly lost, Mrs. Charleton. What are you trying to tell me?"

Frances looked into a tired face, felt two trembling hands take hers, caught a pathetic tremor in the sweet voice that answered:

"Winslow and I alone of all that room interpreted Twilight in the Rose Garden."

CHAPTER XVII

HOLLINGTON GOES FISHING

NITROGEN is one of the most tantalizing of the elements. As a free gas it comprises the greatest part of the earth's atmosphere. In chemical combination it is most commonly found in nitric acid and the host of derivative nitrate salts, in ammonia and in the cyanides. Native nitrogen is so inert that it has practically no function except to dilute the oxygen of the air. Joined into a molecule, however, whether with oxygen, hydrogen, or carbon, it becomes the plaything of the manufacturing and scientific world, for in every ordinary form it is soluble, stable, and easily transformed.

Once it has been harnessed nitrogen becomes immensely valuable to man, being demanded by him in vast quantities. Yet, with the supply everywhere inexhaustible, it is almost impossible to force the inert gas, the nitrogen that we breathe, to affiliate with any other element to first form a molecule. There are two remarkably complicated and widely variant ways by which this may be done. Electricity, with an expenditure of power out of all proportion to the results, produces a molecule based on the nitrogen atom, as shown by the traces of ammonia in the air after a lightning storm. There are factories in operation to reproduce these phenomena commercially.

HOLLINGTON GOES FISHING

The nodules that grow upon the roots of legumes have a faculty of absorbing the free nitrogen of the air, transforming it within themselves, and secreting it into the soil in the form of a highly complicated molecule. The nodules appear to the eye as white pulpy masses, the size and shape of bird shot, clinging in clusters of hundreds to the roots of peas, of vetch, of beans, of clover and its allied group. The secretion thrown off is of inestimable value in enriching the soil, for of the three basic fertilizers nitrogen is more necessary, more available, and far more easily exhausted than either potassium or phosphorus.

The farmer plants one of these legumes, the seeds carefully inoculated unless the soil happens to be sufficiently pregnant with the bacteria. The cover crop, as it is termed, is allowed to mature in the orchards. When it is about to die, and when the end of the rainy season makes the conservation of moisture of supreme importance, this cover crop is plowed into the earth. It is not cut to be carted away, for even in death its value is conserved; its leaves and stalks, rotting underground, add immensely to the richness of the soil as they become converted into humus.

So it was that Clem Harding, having planted vetch in his grove, had watched with great interest the drying of his soil in order not to miss the proper moment to do his plowing. A day arrived when the conditions suited him. He was out at dawn behind his team of greys, holding the handles of the walking plow that was taking a strip of soil a foot wide,

THE INTERLOPERS

and nearly as deep, and literally turning it upside down. He grudged the horses their noon hour rest, as seated in the shade of his cottage he surveyed his morning's work, an acre and a half of black velvet glistening in the sun.

He had little more than started the afternoon grind when there came drifting across the fields the cheery voice of Hollington, calling from the seat of a little roadster. Clem, always glad of an opportunity to talk to Robert, fastened the lines to the plow handle and came to the road.

"Put your team in the barn, Clem. I feel like a naughty child playing hookey, for I've all the rest of the day to myself. We're going to climb San Marcos and catch some fish besides, so you had best tell Peter to water your stock to-night. We may not be home before morning."

"With that ground turning over like snow? Look at that furrow, Doctor. Did you ever see anything prettier? Never mind, wait here while I get my rod." Clem looked in the box on the back of the car. "You have everything we need, water, food and blankets. You are becoming a first-class camping partner. Are you going to take your revolver? Then mine stays home."

While Harding was making his preparations there came from around the bend a rangy brown horse drawing an old farm buggy. Fulton Graham, as he passed, spoke to the doctor, but with an indefinable expression in the greeting that swept away every vestige of Robert's boyish humor. Clem re-

HOLLINGTON GOES FISHING

turned in time to recognize the back of the disappearing vehicle, and his sharp eyes took in every detail of the scene.

Fully aware that he had been detected, Robert was glad to unburden himself. "There's something I don't understand," he said. "This is the fourth experience of the kind I've had this morning. Do people believe I've committed murder?"

"Worse'n that."

"Worse than that? What do you know about it?"

"I heard some talk down at the village last night—"

"Come, man, out with it." Robert was too impatient for the slow drawl.

"It's all about a letter you wrote to the state board of education."

"Is that all?"

"It seems that it's enough."

"Go on, Clem, please tell me."

"Well, some people seem to think that it's your fault that the Japanese boys are back in the school."

"How can they possibly blame me?"

"No one explains exactly how. Everyone knows you were mixed up in it, and a good many of them believe—"

"Clem, all in the world I did was to write a polite letter."

"Yes, I made Donald show me that letter."

"Do you think I did anything that was foolish or wrong?"

"In a way, yes. You might put your fingers into

THE INTERLOPERS

a barrel of grease, fool around in it, and still keep clean. But if a crowd of people saw you doing it, and couldn't see your hands, you know a lot of 'em are going to be sure you had grease all over yourself, and a few will insist that, regardless of your coat sleeves, you went in up to the elbows."

Thus the day's sport had not a very auspicious start. But as the little car chugged up the mountain road that wound and twisted and climbed, the change of scenery brought success to Robert's determination that his outing should not be spoiled. Just as, at times, he could leave Frances in San Clemente, so now he left the latest of his troubles down on the flat, while he drove his car up as far as he could before taking to the trails afoot.

A little off the road, under an old oak tree, was his stopping place. Seven thousand feet above him, still with its crown of snow, towered San Marcos. Flanked on all sides with steep, knifelike ridges, the mountain's summit was miles away, past chaparral hills and sage mesas, beyond the oak country and topping the pines, enthroned in the solitary grandeur of the vast barrens.

It was on the lower levels that the trout streams lay. Fed by the springs and the melting snow, their career started underground, and since they ran into the subterranean rivers of the valleys, only in times of freshet did they remain above the surface until they reached the sea. "Starting nowhere and not going anywhere," Clem was wont to say, they furnished the sportiest fishing and the hardest work

HOLLINGTON GOES FISHING

that a trout hunter could desire. Up slopes that in themselves would be a feat to climb, this hardy pair would go in search of pools. Sometimes they were fortunate enough to find an old cattle trail, but more often they had to force their way through the tangled brush. Their objective was almost always guarded, usually by a tangled mass of chapparal, manzanita, and scrub oak. Unlike the sage or the cactus fields on the edge of the mountains, which could either be crossed or passed by, here there was nothing to do but plunge through, with reckless disregard of hands, faces, and clothes. Only occasionally were they compelled to give up the attempt, for both were hardened to the work, but always was there the double uncertainty of no still water where they expected to find it, or no fish obliging enough to take the bait.

When, for any reason, one pool no longer satisfied, they would scan the walls on either side, studying the place where they wished next to strike the bottom, and the best route to follow to that point. The stream bed was never passable for any distance, so up one of those perpendicular cañon sides they would go, sweating under the merciless sun, panting and bleeding, yet fighting their way up step by step. It was exhilarating sport, splendid for mind and body; any catch under such conditions was fairly earned.

They spoke seldom, even when taking a breathing spell. But under the shade of the willows, after

THE INTERLOPERS

two hours of strenuous work, they did indulge in the luxury of tobacco and fifteen minutes rest.

"About that Rosario school—"

"Don't you dare mention Rosario to me to-day."

"All right; but I was just thinking. This country is one of the great powers. Mexico is nothing, and Japan is between the two. Why is it that we allow Japan to do more for her people in our country than we do for our own people in Mexico, or anywhere else?"

"It is inconsistent," Robert admitted.

"So much so that it makes me think of Ike Tolliver and the Swede. They lived together in the Bitterroot country, and were the best of friends. But they had a quarrel and the Swede had Ike brought up before the justice of the peace, accused of taking his saddle horse without asking and of riding it until it was foundered.

"'Jedge, this here Swede ain't got no horse, never had one', said Ike. 'And I never teched his horse, nohow. And he said special I might take it that time. And there was nothing at all the matter with that horse when I brought it back. And besides, Jedge, it was foundered when I started.'"

That night the two fishermen slept on the fringe of the pine forests, so far had they climbed. Worn out they were, but with the healthy tiredness that is quite different from exhaustion. They cleaned their fish, they packed them safely, then turned to making camp. First, there was the fire to be built. Then enough wood must be gathered to keep it

HOLLINGTON GOES FISHING

burning through the night, for they could not burden themselves each with more than a light blanket, made into a small shoulder pack, with coffee, bacon, bread, a coffee pot, two cups, and a frying pan. Such luxuries as sugar and a small can of condensed milk Clem had always ridiculed; pepper and salt marked his limit.

Around the camp fire that night, with the work all done, in a little world of their own where there were no cares or worries, Clem, yielding to Hollington's urging, unbosomed himself of several ideas on the Japanese question.

"The whole trouble comes from their wanting to be treated as white folks when nature made them yellow. They say they are just as good as we, and they are willing to fight to prove it. It is not a question at all of which is the better. We do not want them as neighbors, and we do not want them to marry our girls. We would feel the same way, no matter if they were the best people on earth, which they are not. They do not understand our idea at all. But if any man or woman in all this country will imagine himself having four or five Japanese as next door neighbors, with one of them his son-in-law, he would know why we Californians do not like them."

When both men lay in their blankets, taking a last smoke before they closed their eyes, Clem again let loose his tongue.

"Did you ever see a bear catching bugs by tearing open a rotten log? There is apt to be a jay or two darting in as close as he can to snatch a louse

THE INTERLOPERS

or a beetle. These Japs do us just about as much good as the jays do the bear. This would not be the nation it is if we lived the way they live, and yet, unless we do they will produce many things cheaper than we can. And all the time they are taking advantage of what our different standards of living have made possible, for without our machinery, our telephones, our railroads, our banks, our water systems, our markets, they could not compete at all."

In the solitudes there is a difference between the twilight of the evening and the early dawn. In the first instance, nature is recumbent, leisurely beginning its nocturnal life. Perhaps it is waiting for the air to cool, perhaps for the moon to rise, or more often postponing action through laziness or inertia. But in the morning there is always some pleasure not yet exhausted, some task to be completed. There is dew on the grass, there is energy in the air, there is life and hurry and excitement.

So it seemed to Robert as at dawn he sat over his coffee and bacon, watching Clem make up the shoulder packs. Far below a little roadster was awaiting him, still farther away was his morning work, and the cares and sorrows that were beginning to fill his life. He was strong enough to take his mind from the valley, to concentrate on the surrounding beauties of nature, to realize that it was a southern California spring. He had slept in a clump of pines which were an outpost of the great forest above. At a little distance from him grew

HOLLINGTON GOES FISHING

some wonderful *Matilija* poppies, large and white and long of stem. Almost at his feet trickled a mountain stream, half hidden in a tangled mass of undergrowth. The banks seemed to be so thickly covered with fern as to preclude other growth, yet sunning themselves by the warm rocks or seeking the dampest of shade was a galaxy of nature's choice jewels. The maidenhair fern was there, the wild strawberry, the cassiope in fringes among the rough granite. The scarlet honeysuckle rose here and there to throw itself, a graceful mantle, over buckthorn and wild rose. Along one bank was strewn a great bed of azaleas with wonderful pink and white blossoms that were after all but a forecast. Early summer would turn the entire mass into one great sheet of perfume and color.

Dr. Hollington was not a botanist, he was a lover rather than a student of nature. He saw all about him the small plant life in countless varieties, with flowers of every color and shape. Many he could identify, the greater part he could not, but he was satisfied, for it was the charm of the aggregate that fascinated him. He moved to a spot from which he could look down the creek and see a hundred feet of water. The stream forced its way among granite boulders, some sunlit, some dark, still others carrying in the form of shadows the outlines of overhanging boughs and leaves. The willows, the alders, and the dogwood, with a few small pine, closed the vista on either side, and overhead as well. The banks were massed with the under-

THE INTERLOPERS

growth, covering or being covered by the accumulation of dead driftwood. The blue sky shone through in tiny flakes, the sunlight now and then touched a flower, a twig, or an old white stump. At some little distance were the giants of the mountains, the cedar, the sugar pine, the redwood, and below them the oak, all too strong and too proud to struggle with the little folks for the possession of the brookside.

Robert lingered on, past sun-up. The murmur of the water was music to his ear, telling him that such spots were infinite as to number, infinite as to time. It was begging for more of his hours, it was enticing him from his work, it was showing him the futility, the insignificance of his sacrifice. It whispered that nothing human, nothing finite, really mattered. It tempted him to go back to Frances, to tell her that he would surrender, that he would do only what the ethics of his profession demanded, that he and she would spend half their lives amidst such scenes as this.

Never before had Robert had to fight himself to do what he conceived to be right; never again did he so far master himself as to be free from the lure of the mountains. It was with an effort that he shouldered his pack and started on the homeward trail. The descent was precipitous but it was not difficult to travel. There ran the entire distance a half natural, half man-made path from which all the brush was gone. Furthermore, the air was cool, the fishermen were rested, and they both were well used to this work. (224)

HOLLINGTON GOES FISHING

A few minutes' walk from the camp there was a tiny clearing, not more than fifty yards across. Covering it for half its width lay a giant sugar pine, long dead. Among its white branches were brake and fever-red poison oak; the chilicote spotted its huge antlers with tiny white blossoms, while amidst the rotting débris of its fall baby oaks and pines half hid themselves. One barkless branch still reached toward the sky and furnished a foothold for a mountain quail, a bird much larger than his valley cousin, wearing a straight top-knot several inches long, and retaining to the full the regal bearing of the breed.

When he flew away at the approach of the men he was followed by his more quietly colored mate, for this was the spring-time, when the birds are paired. Scarcely was gone the sound of their feet upon the pine needles when two robins left the red berries of the manzanita. All nature was coupled, the metallic green breast of a humming bird whizzing by showed he was but joining his mate among the violet blossoms of the nightshade, and even the chipmunk, scampering over the granite edge, was not alone.

The trail crossed a barren, lifeless stretch that had recently been burned, then entered dense deer brush. Straight down the mountain-side ran the path, dropping a thousand feet to the mile and allowing no opportunity to watch for birds or flowers. But the easier going of a meadow brought the two Rosarians into a great field of yellow mustard.

THE INTERLOPERS

Higher than their heads ran the stalks. All that could be seen of this great golden lake were the narrow borders of the opening kept clear by cattle. In and out of the delicate weave of flower and leaf played the blackbirds, those with glossy feathers and bright red epaulets pursuing those whose coats were dull and lustreless.

Robert pressed on, until brought to an abrupt stop by the vista of distant Eden Valley. At his feet lay another bank of deer-brush, with mesa and rolling hills beyond. In the distance lay range after range paralleling each other, ever becoming bluer and more misty as they dissolved into the sky. But between lay a wide yellow streak, flat as an ocean, hazy and indistinct. He could detect the larger trees, if isolated, the lines and cross lines of roads, and every now and then some house or barn. But it was not details he sought. Rosario lay before him, his home and hers, helpless, battered Rosario, depending upon him to fulfill its destiny.

A stray from the higher levels, a dark speck in the sky, there was an eagle slowly sailing overhead. "It is not true," the doctor mused, "that you are alone, for a mate is waiting for you on some crag. It is not true that you are watching and guarding, for you are but seeking something to kill. Yet you are a symbol. So be it, the valley and the solitary eagle!"

When the trail reached the mesa, that apparently level stretch proved to be covered with interminable round mounds, two feet high and three

HOLLINGTON GOES FISHING

yards across, almost touching each other. The hollows between, holding a richer soil, were a spectra of color. The modest, shrinking pansy, half drooping its yellow head, the saucy cream cups, delicate and hairy, tendering their straw colored petals to the wayfarer, the glorious hyacinth, proudly lifting its violet clusters that all might see, the pink paint brush beloved by all the honey eaters, the larkspur, incomparable galaxy of blue, the filigree, weird and fantastic, and ever a pair of doves to rise from the white sage, or a yellow breasted lark singing from mid air, or two ground sparrows, feeding and flirting together; with never a rest from the marvelous changing perfume.

Then a sudden turn in the path threw the traveller into a field of poppies, the crowned queen of the wildflowers. So gorgeous was the mass that no thought could be spared the individual; so wonderful was each golden cup that one dared not look at another, fearing such perfection could not be repeated. Mere words cannot do justice to the flower that drew ships from the sea, that named a great commonwealth, and made it famous. No art of man can reproduce God's own masterpiece, but the heart of Robert Hollington missed none of the coloring, or texture, or form, missed none of the celestial blending of all three, nor the setting of stems and leaves and pods worthy of the jewel they carried, for he was responding to an even greater thing, to the greatest of all gifts from the Father to his children.

THE INTERLOPERS

It was spring. Every flower, every woodland pair, stirred in Robert the age-old instinct to mate, hammered at the barriers that lay between him and Frances. His companion knew that the doctor was fighting something within, and trudged along in silence. For an hour neither had spoken. They had reached the car and packed it, they had climbed in and started home, before Robert awoke to his neglect.

"Clem, I am sorry to have been so rude. What do you think of me?"

"I knew you were having trouble, but I knew that if you had wanted my help you would have asked for it."

"I may call on you yet. When a man reaches a point where he cannot do right without a struggle—"

"I've heard people say, good friends of yours, too, that you were not so much a man as a perfectly balanced piece of machinery; that you had no emotions, no imagination, that you never had done a reckless thing in your life. You've been brought up to keep your feelings to yourself, but you're just as human as any of us, and you should thank God you are."

"There are two answers to your question. One is that you are finding out that you aren't so very unlike the rest of us. The other is that there is a big difference between fighting to keep from doing wrong, and fighting to keep from being miserable when you're doing right."

CHAPTER XVIII

DOROTHY TEACHES SCHOOL

DOROTHY TIBBETTS was one of those women to whom children instinctively turn to be comforted. The world is full of them. There is something in their faces when they smile on a little sufferer, something in their caresses when they lift him to their knees, that brings a warm glow of comfort and happiness to the baby heart and makes him know that he has reached a haven where he is safe from pain and sorrow. This is an attribute of the ideal woman, the woman for whose protection civilization has evolved, the woman for whose comfort men struggle in competition.

The failure of any woman to be able to win this trust does not of itself class her with those unnatural ones who try, more or less successfully, to keep the thoughts of children from their minds. Many a good woman, good with all the praise the word implies, keen with desire to emulate those whom she most admires, simply lacks that intangible attraction which brings the child to her in blind trust. She may eventually win the deeper and more lasting love of the two, but not being spontaneous it cannot come as quickly nor include so great a number.

Miss Tibbetts was not a philosopher. When Helen Cowles came in, with her mouth drooping,

THE INTERLOPERS

rubbing one wet eye with a clenched fist, and complaining that Tommy had snatched away an all day sucker and was now enjoying it, Dorothy did not stop to reason. She pulled little Helen upon her lap, wiped away the tears, and with the touch of her hand, brought smiles once more to the face of the seven-year-old. Tommy, when called to account, explained that since Helen had grabbed his candy and trampled it in the dirt it was perfectly proper for him to take hers. Helen justified her conduct on the ground that Tommy had been pulling her hair, which in turn came from her calling him a nigger baby, and so on. Not the wisdom of Solomon could have decided right from wrong. Dorothy did not try. Her nature was to comfort both, to patch up the quarrel and to admonish them to behave. If Terry Fisher could not make his additions correspond with hers, the teacher did not scold. She coddled him, touched his pride, coaxed him, and made him supremely happy at last when she pronounced his work correct.

The older children presented different problems, but all were solved with the same heart. Dorothy the teacher had been trained to do her work in a stereotyped way, a way which she conscientiously sought to follow. Indeed she would have been greatly surprised if anyone had accused her of varying a hair's breadth from her instructions. Nevertheless she would have been at a loss to find the paragraph in her manual which authorized her to devote her noon recess to helping Willie Bent, an

DOROTHY TEACHES SCHOOL

ambitious, hard working little fellow who just could not keep up. Nor what obligation lay upon her to spend Saturday mornings with a few of the girls who wanted to make clothes, not only teaching what she herself knew about sewing, but actually cutting out and finishing the garments.

Among the older people Dorothy's influence was very strong, though indirect. All the mothers knew her, as every one knows every one else in a place the size of Rosario. But they also knew her as the person with whom their children spent many hours every school day. There was a general comfortable feeling that in the atmosphere of her presence none would be harshly or unjustly treated, nor could any real wickedness long endure. Many thought her weak, who believed in more Spartan methods. These preached to her, urging that she maintain a firmer discipline and keep herself more aloof from the scholars. But they who sought to influence her were far more often influenced by her. Strength and courage there was in plenty in Eden Valley, while meekness and gentleness, weakness if you choose, were relatively unknown. Many a caller leaving Miss Tibbetts without having strengthened the teacher's character, yet went home to speak a kinder word or be more openly affectionate than had been usual.

Dorothy could not share in the prevalent dislike of the Japanese. She could not really have hated even a person who had done her injury. Hers was not the temperament that saw a menace in the yel-

THE INTERLOPERS

low invasion, that shared the fear of its progress, nor sensed the danger it threatened to home and family. To her the very fact that the Japanese were aliens entitled them to sympathy. They had come to this country to improve themselves, financially and otherwise, and to do so by hard labor. Surely that was commendable. But more than all these intangible things these people were human beings. Watsa was not the representative of a foreign nation, he was not a unit in the race problem, he was Watsa, with his individual characteristics, his personal faults and virtues.

So it was as an individual that she received him when he and Hogo and Nanga came back for re-enrollment. These three had returned to her at the first opportunity granted them. Theirs was something of the air of conquerors, mixed, strangely enough, with a curious expression that was half-pathetic, half-childish. With them, on the opening day, came Morita and Yaman, boys on the verge of manhood, smiling happily, though obviously ill at ease. Places in the classes were found for them all, as satisfactory as their ill-balanced educations would permit.

It was not an easy matter to teach them side by side with little children. Miss Tibbetts found the Japanese always requiring special care. They learned so fast that as soon as they had reached the common level of any class they began to pull away, to work for promotion. She helped them, and advanced them as rapidly as she could. Then there

DOROTHY TEACHES SCHOOL

was repeated the struggle to make them keep up sufficiently so as not to demoralize the new class. Or, as often happened, they were kept out of school for days at a time, when their help was needed on the farms. Dorothy could not bear to see them lose standing through no fault or their own. She coached them back to their places, without realizing that the undue attention they received was being paid for by her regular scholars. It had to be so, unless the Japanese were to be held back for the benefit of the whites. In the very nature of things an even balance could not be maintained. She did not segregate and weigh, and then deliberately decide that her own race should be neglected for the yellow. To reason on such an occasion would have been foreign to her nature; her sympathetic soul simply could not see aggregates when specific cases clamored for her assistance.

So she could not understand why her school was not running smoothly, why her standard of scholarship, one that had repeatedly won commendation from her superiors, was rapidly falling below the average of the state. She did not blame the pupils, because to blame did not come easily to her; instead, she worried, examined herself for the cause of the trouble, and worked harder.

Out of the class rooms her attitude was different. Donald Scott had laid out a course of conduct to which she rigidly adhered. Of her own volition she could not have refused the requests of her alien pupils, for the manner in which they made them and

THE INTERLOPERS

the resigned acceptance of her decisions would have over-ridden any resolution. Donald Scott was her rock of refuge. She had been told by him to do certain things, and she obeyed, for in her weakness she clung to his rugged strength, not venturing to take any step alone.

Into this maelstrom of conflicts and perplexities came Takase and Haragae. Past twenty-one years of age, yet so fresh from their native country were they that neither of them understood more than a word or two of spoken English, to say nothing of reading and writing. Hogo had to act as interpreter the day they first presented themselves to Dorothy, asking to be taught.

Here indeed was a problem, for obviously it would not do to put these men in the kindergarten. Dorothy did not shirk her responsibility, she probably had never done such a thing in her life. Sacrificing her own leisure in the most matter of fact way, she promised these men an hour every afternoon. From four o'clock to five every school day she was closeted with them, teaching an alphabet to men who had not known that one existed; teaching words to them by showing a picture and compelling reiteration time and again until the pronunciation was correct and the meaning understood.

So the weeks passed in the Rosario school. Haragae had gone to Los Angeles to work in a store with his father, but Dorothy still kept Takase's hour. For even after she had taught him the rudiments of her language she could find no place for him in





“The time spent with him became the hours to which she looked forward.”

DOROTHY TEACHES SCHOOL

her classes. He often sat through the recitations in subjects other than English, in geography and history for instance, picking up what knowledge he could, but by far the greater part of his time he pored over the special lessons that had been laid out for him. When school had been dismissed he drew a chair beside Dorothy's desk, practiced his English with her, and recited his lessons.

His progress on some lines was slow, especially in grammar and in the construction of sentences. In arithmetic, for instance, and less so in several other branches, he severely taxed Dorothy's knowledge. And with his insatiable thirst for learning came a greed for Dorothy's teaching, so that he soon acquired the habit of walking home with her, adding thereby another twenty minutes spent in rehearsing the day's lessons or perhaps in just practicing the language.

The girl was being flattered as she never had been before. To be able to help, to really help, such a brain as Takase's, to supplement his cleverness with her education, was unction to her soul. That he actually came to her for guidance on subjects not directly connected with the school, that he looked up to her, needed her, and accepted her pronouncements as final, gave to their intercourse a strong personal element. The time spent with him became the hours to which she looked forward, the hours that brought rest from the petty worries of her life. There was no curtain of color or creed separating

THE INTERLOPERS

their minds, or marring the intercourse that was a little private matter just between these two.

It was Mrs. Hastings who first suggested that Dorothy Tibbetts was seen too often in Takase's society. It was Bessie Scott who heard her say so, and straightway the mother in the latter turned her into the champion of the teacher. Mrs. Scott explained in detail just what were the relations between the two.

"You see it's simply a matter of her teaching him," she concluded.

"Of course, I don't think she could possibly be interested in him," rejoined Mrs. Hastings. "No nice girl, brought up as she has been, could ever care for a Japanese farm hand. Nevertheless, she is a woman and he is a man, and as long as they are together so much there is bound to be talk. She is all alone with him in the empty school building every afternoon, for goodness knows how long. When I passed them coming home yesterday they didn't look to me like people who were going over lessons."

"That's perfectly ridiculous. The very idea of gossiping about anyone as pure-minded as Dorothy, especially when she is only teaching. She doesn't want those boys in her school, she is compelled to have them."

"All the same there is a great deal of uneasiness in this valley over so many girls and so many Japanese being together. Miss Tibbetts should be par-

DOROTHY TEACHES SCHOOL

ticularly careful to set an example. I really think you should speak to her."

"She is doing nothing that I don't know all about and thoroughly approve."

Nevertheless, Bessie did repeat this conversation to Dorothy. Mrs. Scott had been as gentle as possible, for she wished to discount the expected tears and repentance. Imagine her surprise when the young woman simply laughed about it. The turning of the rabbit to fight the hound seemed no more unnatural than the disregarding by this timid girl of the opinions of those about her. Bessie was wise enough not to press the matter, but at the first opportunity she laid her suspicions before her husband.

"Mrs. Hastings has been talking nonsense to you until you are hysterical," said Donald. "Then, because the child doesn't take it as seriously as you, you think all manner of things of her. The way she acted shows that you can trust her."

"Donald, you must stop her."

"Why?"

"Because of what Mrs. Hastings says, and because she's saying it."

"I'll tell Dorothy, if you want me to, that she must give up this work out of hours. We can let her down easily. I wouldn't hurt her feelings for the world, but we can't have people saying unkind things about her."

"It's not safe to go to her at all."

"Why?"

THE INTERLOPERS

"Because I'm afraid she wouldn't obey you."

"What do you mean? Do you think—"

"Yes, Donald, I do."

"Bessie, I'm positively ashamed of you. I know that most women say things like that, but for you, why it doesn't sound at all like my Bessie."

"I love the girl every bit as much as you do, Donald. I know more about this than you, because I'm a woman, and I think it's my right to have you respect my judgment."

"What do you want me to do?" Donald was clearly beginning to worry.

"Takase must quietly disappear from Dorothy's life. If I've done her an injustice this will do no harm. But if I'm right any open opposition would be dangerous, for it might bring matters to a head, and Dorothy is just the girl to be very obstinate if her affections are engaged. Besides," Bessie hurried on, for she saw that her husband's anger was again rising, "the more quietly the situation is ended the sooner will unpleasant comment die down."

"How would you go about it?"

"I believe you could interest Dr. Hollington."

"Why Hollington?"

"They say it's his fault that the Japanese are in the school. Whether it is or not he might feel some responsibility. Takase is a cousin or something of Saishoto. Perhaps the doctor could persuade Saishoto to tell Takase to give up his studying altogether and go back to work."

DOROTHY TEACHES SCHOOL

"It may be that you are right, Bessie. This isn't at all the way I would go about it, but as you said awhile ago, you know a great deal more about such things than I. We will find out right away what Hollington will do."

A few days later Dorothy came home as soon as school was over. "I've lost my special student," she explained. "He's reached a point where he can go on by himself now. He's going to work for Saishoto for a few weeks, and then he is to open a store in Seattle."

"I'm very glad for your sake, Dorothy. You have been working too hard. I hope after this that you will be able to spend more time out of doors."

"Oh, I have no time to play, Mrs. Scott, I have allowed my wardrobe to become all run down, so I'm going to do a lot of sewing now. But in the daytime I'll take my basket out under the trees; the air might make me look and feel a little fresher."

As the days went by Bessie Scott had to accept a good deal of sarcasm from her husband. He admitted that it was a good thing for all concerned to have Takase drop out of their lives, and he admitted, too, that her idea of sending for Hollington had been excellent. But to have thought for a moment that Dorothy could possibly lose her head over her pupil, that her interest in him had been love in any degree, was so absurd that Donald could not forego the pleasure of unmercifully teasing his better half.

THE INTERLOPERS

"Does she act lovelorn?" he would ask. "Have you ever seen her happier? Would she sing at her work if she were eating out her heart for any man? I see Charlie Essing was around again yesterday."

And poor Bessie had never a word to say.

In the course of a few days there drifted back to the Scotts the story of Hollington's interview with Saishoto. It seems that it had not been pleasant, that there had been some feeling displayed on both sides during the discussion. The doctor had laid the whole matter before Saishoto as tactfully and as considerately as possible, and had requested that the unpleasant situation be ended. Saishoto had been very much hurt to learn that Miss Tibbetts' friends, the white people in general, should regard Takase's friendship as something undesirable. It was an insult to the Japanese race, which Saishoto, ever their champion, resented. Since he could not or would not be mollified, Hollington told him frankly that while before the law their equality would be recognized, when American womanhood was involved there could be no quibblings and no pretense. Saishoto stubbornly refused to change his ground; to do so, he argued vehemently, would be to admit once for all that his was an inferior race.

Hollington took and firmly maintained the attitude that no question of superiority was involved, that the point at issue was only the unquestionable one that there was a difference. Definitely and positively Robert insisted that the Japanese in Rosario

DOROTHY TEACHES SCHOOL

must recognize the fact, and that this was as good a time as any for them to do so. His domineering strength carried his point eventually, but Saishoto, thought beaten into submission, yielded with such poor grace that the friendship between the two became strained.

CHAPTER XIX

FRANCES COMES HOME

IT was at the supper table in his own home, the day after Frances' return, that Sam Coulters told her the inside story of why Tower had resigned from the board of school trustees, had sold out to Hanba, and left the valley.

"All because he wouldn't send Edith and Virginia to school," commented Mary Coulters. "It seems as though there ought to have been some other way."

"I can't think that what he did was for the best, yet there are others who not only do so believe, but are very apt to follow his example."

"It's just like a pestilence carrying away people one likes. I'm almost afraid to ask you to whom you refer, just as I would be if you had told me that someone was dead," said the daughter.

"Fulton Graham and Mrs. McClure have both been to see Hanba within the past few days, and I know that there are others who are thinking of doing the same."

"You must go to those others, Sam. Show them that they are making a mistake. I can't reason the matter out in your orderly way, but I do know that what they are doing is all wrong, that they can protect their girls without having to give up their homes." Mary's heart was in her words.

"I've seen every one who has a daughter over

FRANCES COMES HOME

ten in that school. Fortunately there are not many. And of them not more than four or five families will leave the valley."

"Who are hesitating?" Frances asked.

"It's better not even to mention their names at present. I've shown them how easily the Japanese can be kept away from the girls, how safe the children can be on their way to and from school. The board of trustees will lay out certain rules to be followed, which it can easily enforce, for it would be only too glad of an opportunity to expel those boys, one after another. I have met every objection that has been raised, for I have never had an easier task than to talk down those parents. Unfortunately, winning the debate from them does not keep them in Rosario."

"I know better than you why it does not. I, too, am a woman and a mother. If the girls are where the danger is, every instinct in the parent's nature is up in arms, clamoring for the removal of the children, not merely to a point of safety but clear away from the source of contamination."

"If people are frightened, father, and in a panic, you can't hope to influence them with reason." Frances showed her concern. "I'm going to see Mrs. Graham and Mrs. McClure, not to argue with them, but to try to get them quieted, so that they can think the matter out for themselves. They're not really thinking at all just now."

"What can one do about it?" Mary asked hopelessly.

THE INTERLOPERS

"The little fire has to burn itself out. We can do nothing more to allay the school trouble, for the damage is done. I'm waiting now until the new law goes into effect; then I think we'll find ourselves safe and the Japanese about to be relegated back where they belong. We have team play again in Rosario. Everyone seems hopeful, and try as he may I don't believe that Hanba will pick up many farms in the next few weeks; there are too many working against him."

No one commented on these remarks, so the meal proceeded in silence, broken at last by Ruth.

"I wonder if Robert Hollington is as much to blame as people say?"

The poor girl would have given anything to have been able to recall the question. Sam's face turned to a mask at the mention of the name. Mary's was overrun with anxiety, and Frances—she tried to sit it out, yet it was only a moment before she had found an excuse for leaving the room. Ruth followed, to undo as much as she could, so the discussion ended for the present.

The next morning the two girls hurried through their household duties, the dishes, the beds, and the dusting. Then, true to Frances' promise they went to see Mrs. McClure. While Ruth was tying the horse, two small children tore around the corner with an affectionate welcome. Frances grabbed both of the infants, squeezing and kissing them in turn, for they had long been her special favorites. The foster mother, still wearing an apron and holding

FRANCES COMES HOME

a damp tea towel, came rushing through the kitchen door. She threw her arms about Frances, gathered her to her ample bosom, while the light in the widow's face told more than any words could have done, how delighted she really was.

And then from across the fields came Alfred Carroll. "I recognized the buggy," he said, "before I heard those little rascals squeal. They told me you were here so I had to drop everything to come over to let you know how glad we all are that you are home again."

"It's splendid to be here. How well you are looking. And those babies of yours; it does my heart good to see them."

"We've been a different family since they've been living on this place. Sometimes I don't know which to thank more, Mrs. McClure or Dr. Hollington."

"How are you getting on with your farm work?" Ruth was usually quiet when in a group, speaking only if she had cause. The expressions of each of the other women made imperative a change in topics, and Ruth was quick-witted enough to turn the conversation.

"The trees are looking fine," said Carroll, "but of course there are troubles. There always are in fruit growing. I've found more scale than I like to see, and the skins of the oranges are not as I want them to be. But spray will fix one and potash the other. The most serious problem just now is water. Our greatest trouble is over, for these Japanese can't absorb any more of us."

THE INTERLOPERS

"I wish that were so," half murmured the widow.

"What do you mean?" asked Carroll.

"There's still the interval before that law goes into effect," said Mrs. McClure.

"And Hanba is going to use every means he knows to get as much land as he wants before it is too late," added Ruth. "Everyone must be on his guard the next few weeks, for as father says, there's apt to be some pretty tricky plays."

"So Mr. Coulters says there are apt to be some tricky plays?" Mrs. McClure asked sarcastically. "How about the tricky plays that have already been?"

"Do you mean Dr. Hollington?" asked Carroll, angrily.

"Yes, I mean Dr. Hollington," answered the widow, looking Alfred squarely in the face.

"I will not let you say such things about him, after all he has done for me and for you and for all of us."

"Well, what has he done for you and for me and for all of us?" Mrs. McClure knew her opponent could not bear this. "He told you you were a crazy fool and you were. Plenty of other people have told you the same thing. As for me and Rosario, why he has turned against his own people, his neighbors and his friends—"

"He has not!" Carroll was so enraged that he could scarcely articulate.

The woman was too quick for him. "He has shown the Japanese how to make Eden Valley a

FRANCES COMES HOME

place where white people can't live, and I, for one, am going to get out."

"He had nothing more to do with it—"

"Nothing more than everything. Who told those men to go to their consul? Who furnished the proofs for them? Who puts all these ideas in their heads? Whose lead do they follow in everything?"

"I'm going to take my children away from you, you are not fit—"

"You can't help taking them, for I will not stay here one minute longer than I have to. Your Dr. Hollington has—"

"Now you know, Mrs. McClure, you're not going to leave us." It was not until Frances had intervened with her quiet voice that the others realized how loud and angry their tones had become.

"I am, just as soon—"

"You dislike Hanba and the Japanese very much, do you not?"

"Yes, and Dr. Hollington for his—"

"It doesn't matter who's to blame. It's your own self you must consider. We'll leave Dr. Hollington out."

"Oh, I forgot." Mrs. McClure wilted so suddenly and pathetically that Ruth only with difficulty was able to suppress her laughter.

"Are you sending Sadie to school?"

"No." It was a very subdued and quiet answer.

"Do you know that the other mothers are sending their daughters?"

"Mrs. Graham and Mrs.—"

THE INTERLOPERS

"The other mothers are; perhaps not every one. They believe when men like my father and Donald Scott promise to protect the children that there is no danger. You should have more faith in your own people instead of allowing yourself to be fooled by Hanba. Whatever else you do, keep your house until you see what is going to happen."

"But if I do not sell to Hanba now I never can."

"Your farm will never be worth less than Hanba is offering you, and it may sometime be worth a great deal more."

Ruth had done her share towards ending the quarrel by talking to Carroll about his children. Soon Mrs. McClure was interested as much as Alfred, and the bitterness between them disappeared as it had done many a time before.

Frances and Ruth made their excuses, so Carroll untied their horse while they climbed into the buggy. "You will not do anything hasty, will you?" Frances asked the widow. "Think it all over, and then use your imagination. Picture what is to become of you and Sadie, and of the two children."

The girls drove towards the Graham place. Frances was having a hard time, and Ruth knew something of her heartache, and her longing to go to the man in trouble and bring him sympathy and comfort. The younger sister respected the long silences that came so frequently; she felt that she could offer no greater help than to be with the other as much as possible, and to talk only when words seemed best. So the two were sitting each busy

FRANCES COMES HOME

with her own thoughts when they came face to face with Donald Scott.

He was homeward bound, driving four horses, his big farm wagon loaded to its capacity with bales of red oat hay. On recognizing the girls he stopped his team, set the brake with his foot, and fastened the lines about its lever, then climbed down from his high seat. In welcoming Frances he was as demonstrative as his nature ever permitted him to be.

"From some of the stories I heard I was afraid we were going to lose you," he said. "It would indeed be a pity if any child of Sam Coulters should not be here when the law goes into force."

"It will make a great difference, will it not, Mr. Scott?"

"It has already done so. For instance, at Nagasaki—"

"Nagasaki?"

"That is what they call the colony around the old Packhard homestead, just as they have given the nickname Tokio to the place where Saishoto lives, and Yokohama to the plague spot that started when Delaque sold. As I was about to say, before Graham sold his place—"

"Have the Grahams sold?" Frances did not attempt to conceal her disappointment. "We were on our way to see them, to try to persuade them not to give up just yet. And now they have sold. It's too bad."

"It is pretty bad for Hancock, and it may be for

THE INTERLOPERS

me. Arthur and I had both counted on being safe from ever having the Japanese as neighbors. You remember our farms lie in a row; mine, then Arthur's, then Fulton's, then Norton's, and then the first of the Japanese."

"Yes, I remember," Frances interrupted. "But what has happened? When I left home the Nortons were supposed to be as dependable as you or father, and to have money enough to protect themselves."

"Hanba bought the mortgage on the Ellis piece. He forced Ellis to sell by threatening foreclosure."

"Ellis, too? I hadn't heard of that."

"So Norton was surrounded on two sides, and when the Grahams let go there was nothing for him to do but make the best terms with Hanba that he could. That puts Arthur next to the infection and he becomes the only protection that I have left. So you see why we two are glad that the new law takes effect so soon."

"Will it make you safe?"

"Absolutely. Almost without exception Hanba has played the game of late as he did with Ellis. But he will buy no more mortgages; he could not use them if he did. There is no conceivable way by which he can reach either Arthur Hancock or me before the first of the month. And if he leaves us alone, Arthur and me and every one else in this valley, we will not lose our farms. Speaking for us all, if there is no interference we can borrow money, get an extension, and do business as we always have done. Those who have Japanese neigh-

FRANCES COMES HOME

bors are still going to suffer hardship, but now that the incentive has been taken away from the trouble makers there will be no more freezing out. So you see why all Rosario is grateful to your father, and has taken on a holiday spirit."

"How is your school progressing? I have been talking to Mrs. McClure, and she does not think it safe for her Sadie."

"It'll all work out in time. Dorothy is doing splendidly, so there is no criticism from Sacramento, and not very much from the valley. We are proud of her for being able to keep everyone so well satisfied."

"Tell her I'm coming over to see her and Mrs. Scott as soon as I can spare the time. I shall tell father what you said about him and how you feel. He's sure to be pleased."

The girls decided not to make their call on the Grahams, but to go directly to Edward Winfield. On the way they met several old friends. The Sanfords were even more enthusiastic over the future than Donald had been, and they cited several instances showing how the heart was coming back to Eden Valley. Irving Stanhope affected more than his usual dignity as he greeted the girls with his old fashioned courtesy. Nevertheless, he brought the same tidings of good will towards their father and of growing cheer in Rosario.

"One of the finest things I ever knew a man to do was Mr. Coulter's refusal of that commissioner-ship," said the minister.

THE INTERLOPERS

"What was that?" Ruth asked.

"It's so like him, not to have told. Rutherford White and the governor offered him a place on the highway commission. It would have been very congenial work, have given him a position in the world, and have paid him well. He didn't accept because he felt that it would conflict with his duty towards the settlement. That was such a noble act that I shall mention it in my sermon on Sunday. He seems to feel more strongly even than Hollington that though an obligation be voluntarily assumed it must be carried through without regard to personal consequences."

Frances could not answer such a remark aloud, and it began to come to her that she could not answer it to herself. Reason on it she could not, she willingly admitted. It must be a demand her heart could not put into words, for a love that would come to her without restrictions. She regarded the relationship between her father and mother as perfect, yet she well knew that if the husband had refused this appointment from a sense of duty, nothing the wife could say would make him alter his decision. That was not lack of loyalty, that was not relegating love to second place. Was it for those characteristics that the minister had praised, Frances wondered, the very qualities that made her heart glow with affectionate pride, that she exalted one man and condemned the other? Training and heredity told her there was a difference.

She was so fond of Edward Winfield, so thor-

FRANCES COMES HOME

oughly glad to see him again and to find him at least as strong as when she had left, that these worries and misgivings slipped into the background. She had many messages from Mrs. Charleton to deliver to the brother, much to recount of the life in San Clemente, many inquiries to make regarding the health and the plans of the invalid. Ruth entered into the long conversation that ensued only as politeness demanded. The young girl was realizing how greatly those few weeks had changed Frances, and Edward's attitude also. For the older two met on a plane much nearer equality than ever before, and spoke familiarly to each other of things which were fascinating to Ruth and yet far beyond her comprehension. In her own home Frances had been the Frances of old, with no appreciable difference in thought or habit, but in Winfield's presence she was the Frances that Mrs. Charleton had brought out, the girl about whom all San Clemente had gone wild. And Ruth, for the first time, was seeing the emergence of the chrysalis.

On his side, Edward saw a vindication of his prophecies, and understood better what lay behind a number of letters he had received from his sister. Frances alone was serenely unconscious. She was radiant, as a result partly of the reaction from the temporary morbidness, partly from pleasure in finding Rosario so complacent and so grateful to her father, and partly from accumulating evidence of the sincerity that underlay the country friendships. Each member of the little gathering was happy in his own

THE INTERLOPERS

way, each felt that the best that was in him was coming to the surface, and each was disappointed when the visit ended, when it became necessary for the girls to go home to prepare the supper.

"Do not be an idealist, Ruth," Frances broke out on the way. "If you should ever learn to love a man, take his love if you want happiness. Search for microscopic flaws if you must, but do not let your mind run away with your heart as I have done, or you too may find yourself tangled within the meshes of a net from which you cannot free yourself. I want to go to him, Ruth, now, while he is in trouble and needs a comforter. I want to look into his eyes and say, 'I love you for what you are, and I accept you for what you are.' But something is in the way, something I cannot get around, something I cannot even comprehend, something that makes it impossible. It is nothing as small as pride or obstinacy, it must be that I am so wrapped up in idealism that I cannot be satisfied even with the finest man I have ever known. Yet that does not seem to explain it. Oh, if I could only understand!" And the poor girl broke down.

She pulled herself together presently, as she felt Ruth's arm slipping about her. "I feel better for having said this to you, dear, but I want you to promise never to speak of it to me."

And Ruth, with love and sympathy in every line of her face, kissed her and gave the promise.

CHAPTER XX

THE BLACK SCALE

WHEN spring came to Eden Valley it brought vigor to the trees, it added shoots to the branches, it changed buds into leaves and fruit. But as prosperity is ever a loadstone to greedy outsiders, so the fresh, strong growth did not escape the parasite. Rosario was invaded by the black scale.

There are many insects that prey upon the citrus. There is the gnat-like white fly, the red spider and the silver mite, the citriocola scale, the black, the purple, the brown, the red, the yellow, the greedy, the oleander and the cottony cushion scale, all of which feed upon the sap of the trees. It seems to be universal that whatever lives upon the labors of others does so by taking only the choicest, discarding the rest and destroying much to obtain little. The tortrix bores into the fruit just through the rind; the rose beetle feeds at night upon the tender growth of young trees; the diabrotica can eat the orange only; the mealy bug and the aphids add their toll.

Of them all the black scale is the most widely distributed and through force of numbers the most destructive. Like all the other insects mentioned it is highly specialized, it can feed only upon certain trees and can withstand only certain climatic conditions. Therefore, in some localities it is unknown,

THE INTERLOPERS

or so scarce as to be negligible, in others it may lie unheeded season after season, only to become a terrible scourge when conditions meet its requirements.

The egg is so small that a hundred placed in line would not exceed one inch in length. For twenty days these eggs are incubating, becoming darker as they change from a pearly white to pink, and from pink to red. The young remain in the pod a day or two, then having gained full strength emerge and swarm along the branches until they reach the leaves. Some three months later their beaks will have strengthened sufficiently to pierce the bark of the limbs as well as the tissue of the leaves, and so, to avoid the certainty of death should the latter fall, the still immature scale begin to congregate on the branches of the tree. Here eventually the insects attain their full development, the male emerging from the pupa with antennae, legs and wings. The female is a little black round shell, in length about an eighth of an inch. She begins to deposit eggs at the rate of thirty to forty a day, continuing for about two months. Her body gradually dries and disappears, until she eventually becomes nothing but an empty pod to contain her young. And so the life cycle is completed.

This simple little history, however, is interwoven with wide-spreading complications. Just as the scale preys upon its host and has developed itself to take full advantage of every weakness of the tree, so a horde of enemies have arisen which attack the black

THE BLACK SCALE

scale at every stage, insects upon whom have grown instruments fitted for that one purpose. There are others who do the scale no direct injury, yet whose lives, in whole or in part, are dependent upon it.

For instance, the scale excretes a sweet, sticky substance called honey dew. It appeals to the ants, who climb the trees in countless hordes to add it to their larders. Too impatient at times to await nature's course, they tickle and tease the scale to hurry the excretion. There is a saprophyte which finds in the honey dew a very suitable medium for its growth. This fungus literally covers the trees with a sooty mold and with black vegetative threads.

There are flies and beetles which live upon the black scale, which can sustain life and propagate in no other way. The scutellista is a wonderful example of such specialization. This little fly, a quarter of an inch in length, crawls among the scale pods, slips an egg under one of them, moves to another, to repeat the process several hundred times. As soon as they hatch her larvae begin to devour the eggs within the shell, by means of sharp chitinous hooks designed specially for that purpose. Six generations in a season, food and nesting place provided, it seems a simple, easy life. But if you stop to reflect that the progeny of one fly in a year could account for a column of scale as tall as a man, of the same width, and extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, you must realize that the fate of nearly every fly is quite the reverse of a happy one, it is death by starvation. And if that were not

THE INTERLOPERS

enough, there is the cerchysius, a hyperparasite, whose egg is also placed under the scale pod, and whose larvae devour that of the scutellista. Truly man sets up a wonderful chain of interrelations when he plants an orange tree in his front yard.

There are other parasites to the number of a dozen or more, and there are the predatory insects, beetles that not only feed on the unhatched eggs but even pursue the young scale, seizing them upon the leaves or the stems. The rhizobius and the ladybird kill in immense numbers, but where a mother scale hatches as many as three thousand young their capture one by one is a slow means of extermination.

Speaking generally, insects live either upon vegetable matter or upon each other, and all the former are preyed upon by some form of the latter which have developed, through a process of evolution, certain attributes that meet the special conditions under which the vegetarians live and breed. Were this not so the incredible fecundity of the insect world would soon divest the earth of every living grass and tree. But such a system of control is not one suited to the maintaining of an even balance. For as the so-called host, if the slaughter is unchecked, must be overtaken by the enemy, there is bound to come a time when there are not enough to go around. The parasites hunt desperately in every nook and cranny for food for themselves and their offspring, until the last of their prey is gone, where-

THE BLACK SCALE

upon they themselves, unable to utilize other insects, die by unnumbered billions.

If the tragedy were complete both species would disappear from the face of the earth. But there are always a few survivors, and then it is that the vegetable eaters may run away from their control. That they will be overtaken again is a certainty. This may come about almost at once, it may come with regularity at the end of the season, or, depending on how great a start was had, it may not come until the land has been visited by a terrible plague.

The fruit growers of Eden Valley did not choose to let nature take its course, for they needed their fruit, and it must come out clean and spotless. So they started arrangements to spray. Sam Coulters took the lead in this, as he always had done, because one of the prime requisites was that everyone must join, and Sam's ability to force unanimous action was generally recognized. Such conditions had arisen before so often, that the falling into line had become a habit. Refractory farmers there had been, but such had learned their lessons years ago, when neighbors brought to bear more pressure than anyone could withstand. Now there was none to say no when Coulters gave the word that on a certain day spraying should commence.

Saishoto, as spokesman for the Japanese colony, had had matters explained to him. It was hard to make him fully understand the situation, and his people, who could better afford it than any of the whites, demurred at the expense. But the prepa-

THE INTERLOPERS

rations went on, pending the time when the Japanese should be persuaded or compelled to do their share. There was nothing in their attitude to indicate a final refusal, and instances were known to all Rosarians of Sam's heavy hand falling upon obstinate slackers who had loudly proclaimed that no one could make them act against their will.

The best means by which to kill the black scale is still a matter of opinion. There are sprays with poison in solution, sprays of dry powder, as lime and sulphur, sprays of emulsions, kerosene and distillate; there are soaps and mixtures and washes without limit. The principle of applying them is always the same. On a wagon bed is mounted a small gasoline engine, attached to a pump and to a tank in such a way that several nozzles at the end of pieces of hose throw a fine spray. Usually there are four of these, with a man and a row to each stream. While a team slowly drags the outfit through the orchard the trees are drenched, one at a time, in an effort to kill every living thing upon them.

Such had been the custom in Rosario. But this season there was less than two years' growth upon the trees, so fumigation was to be adopted. The method is to throw over a tree a gas proof bag, and fill the covering with hydrocyanic acid gas. This is the most expensive, but under proper conditions by far the most effective means of clearing the orchard of its pests. A specially designed machine known as a cyanofumer is used, and the work gen-

THE BLACK SCALE

erally done at night, and proceeds rapidly once a good outfit has been assembled. As the cost of the latter, including tents, is upwards of a thousand dollars, one outfit was bought for the valley and the expense equally divided.

Saishoto still held back. At first he had had to consult Hanba, whose answer was noncommittal. The other Japanese, as was to be expected, would do nothing without their leader. While there was being made this unsatisfactory effort to compel an answer, actual fumigation was started. Clem Harding's place was the first to be treated, for it was on the extreme western edge of the valley. The scale could make no headway against the prevailing west wind, and so if all the work were done down the wind, the clean trees could not be infected from the ones that had not been reached.

The time was approaching rapidly when some action must be taken regarding Tokio, the name now given to the settlement about the former Warner homestead. So Coulters went to Hollington. For the first time since that memorable night of the abortive lynching, Sam deliberately sought out the doctor, one of the few men whom he really hated. Since this had to be done for the sake of Rosario Sam put his pride to one side to perform the task in person, respect for himself as well as his enemy dictating that there should be no emissary.

"I came to see if you could help the people of this valley." The old pioneer was very formal and polite. "We're fumigating for black scale, and it's

THE INTERLOPERS

necessary that the Japanese join us. I have no doubt that they would if we could put the matter up to them properly. That has been our difficulty, and that's why we need your assistance. You understand them and know how to handle them, which none of the rest of us do."

Robert met his visitor on absolutely neutral ground. "I'm afraid you all overrate my influence, still I'll be glad to do what I can. But you know that I can't argue convincingly with them knowing as little about the thing as I do. I will go with you to see Saishoto now, if you choose, and perhaps together we can accomplish something."

But the Japanese proved obdurate. The net result of a long argument, which took up every phase of the scale question, was the final refusal of the Asiatics to either fumigate or spray, now or later. Saishoto was thoroughly posted on the peculiarities of the parasite. He knew that before long the orchards would be practically cleared, especially if there were nothing to drift in from the outside. He made Sam admit that the most serious damage that would be done in the interim would be the staining of the fruit by the fungus on the honey dew, resulting in a serious cut in price, if not an actual refusal to purchase by the packers. He was himself trapped into confessing that the reason he wouldn't fumigate was because the Japanese had decided among themselves to save expense by handwashing their fruit at night.

"Whether he can or not, I know we can't afford

THE BLACK SCALE

to do that, for it would eat up all our profits. I know the only reason he can is because we are fumigating all about him. If he were only a white man I would have him in line or out of this valley within twenty-four hours. But these! We are not people who lie down and quit, we are not weak enough or simple enough to be run over by a crowd like that. You know them. I will move heaven and earth if you will tell me how to get at them."

"There is no way."

Once the heat of his anger had passed, Sam brought himself to the footing on which he had first met Robert. He thanked the doctor on parting, in a more than perfunctory way, for the effort. Hollington waved the thanks aside, regretted that he had been unable to be of any assistance, and promised to hold himself ready should his services ever be needed.

Whatever the ultimate effects of Saishoto's action might be, the immediate result was trouble for Sam. There were twelve men whose places on the east or southeast adjoined Japanese-owned farms. Without exception these men rebelled. They argued that as their groves would soon be infected they could not afford to pay their share of fumigation, and demanded that the whole proceeding be stopped. On the other hand, those who had gone in in good faith simply could not be induced to agree to a larger assessment, nor could proceedings end, because a considerable acreage had already been cov-

THE INTERLOPERS

ered, the machinery had been bought and used, and large amounts of chemicals had been consumed.

Coulters worked it out, but it taxed his authority to the breaking point. He explained to the manufacturers that the withdrawal of the Japanese had left him hopelessly short on funds, and was able to obtain an extension of time. He persuaded the big drug house to wait for its money, and he held their written agreements up to the recalcitrants in the valley, until the last one had surrendered. Then he went after Hanba, but here he was confronted by an economic condition. The white men could not afford to hand-wash, so they had fumigated. It therefore became slightly cheaper for the Japanese to clean the fruit than to fight the scale, figuring, as they did, that their night work was costing them but little—it represented added labor rather than added outlay. Over and over the ground Sam went, trying to arouse that patriotism for which the Japanese were famous. But unlike emigrants from Canada or from Europe, the Mongolian settlers had no affection for their new homes. It would have been strange if their hearts had not remained in Nippon, for they were not welcomed in this new land to which they had come, nor allowed to become a part of the people already there. As public spirit neither existed nor could be aroused, as threats to men of such dispositions would have been worse than useless, the Japanese had to be allowed to follow out their selfish inclinations.

The effect upon Rosario was slow, but it was very

THE BLACK SCALE

far-reaching. It ultimately brought bankruptcy to at least half a dozen families, and seriously crippled many more. In a thickly settled community like Eden Valley, grove adjoins grove so closely that the rows of trees are often not over thirty feet apart. The prevailing west wind, gentle breeze that it is, can easily carry the feathery like young scale to far greater distances than that. The young, too, crawling about blindly, are transplanted on the feet of birds and butterflies. So it was not long before great parts of Rosario were again infected, before the trees took on the sickly color that comes from the sapping of their strength, before the honey dew and the fungus appeared upon their leaves, and then upon their fruit.

As the talk about this whole occurrence spread through the valley, there developed a display of disappointment in Hollington. The story of a year before, when Robert had taken Sango from a house full of armed men, was compared with his failure in this instance. He was known to have had some clash with the Japanese concerning Takase. So on the whole Rosario came to the conclusion that Robert's influence over the Asiatics was disappearing.

In this they were not as far right as facts appeared to warrant, although there was a decided tendency that way. He still called at their houses as had been his wont, still gave advice and help when it was wanted. His personal friendship for Saishoto was not as cordial as it had been, and a sense of loyalty to Frances kept him from noticing

THE INTERLOPERS

Kotingo more than was necessary. Furthermore, the Japanese on the whole were rapidly acquiring experience which gave them a growing confidence in their own judgment. In such cases as that of fumigation, for instance, they were now willing to consider and determine things for themselves, whereas a year before they would have followed Hollington willingly.

It was this development more than any loss of prestige that accounted for the public opinion of Eden Valley. Hollington's continued visits were puzzling to those who did not understand the man's nature, who did not know that he would do the best he could on any predetermined course of conduct, be that best great or small. As often occurs when people in numbers are puzzled, all sorts of wild conjectures were made, even Kotingo's name was mentioned by some.

CHAPTER XXI

FRANCES AND KOTINGO

FRANCES became restive, as the spring merged into summer. Day after day the sky was nearly cloudless, for there had set in the long summer drought that would continue until late in the fall. The grain fields, turning yellow, were being harvested, and the plowing under of the cover crops was spreading over the orchards a dull, almost colorless mulch. Everywhere, except in the trees themselves, green was disappearing. In the hills and by the roadsides the native grasses were withered, the wild flowers disappeared over night, and nature prepared herself to meet the bright, dry days that were to come.

Many and many a time the girl's mind reverted to "Twilight in the Rose Garden," and passed on to the camps of the Japanese. There slowly grew a desire on her part to see at first hand the home of the enemy, the house that Robert visited, the rock on which her romance had been shattered. She found, among many other reasons for gratifying herself, the thought that she might be able to offer some kindnesses which would in no way jeopardize the interests of the valley. And then too, if she were to have an intelligent understanding she must know how these people lived.

It was a simple matter to explain to herself, and

THE INTERLOPERS

she did not consult her family. So one clear, sunny day, just such a day as there had been for weeks, and would be for months to come, she threw a bonnet over her head and set out afoot on the once familiar way to the Kraemer place.

It was warm, but not unpleasantly so, for the ocean breeze that blew the year around maintained a comfortable temperature. Frances found the walk altogether too short, for once her destination came clearly into view, shyness and diffidence assailed her. She resolutely continued, however, and soon found herself within the ruined garden. Here a curious spectacle presented itself. On one side of the house was a cheap iron bath tub, set up in the yard without piping or plumbing of any kind. Within it could be distinguished the naked torsos of two men, while a young woman, freely conversing with them from time to time, fed the small fire that warmed the water.

Frances' resolution wavered, until she noticed that the little scene was not visible from the front porch. So she hurried on and rang the doorbell. In answer, Kotingo came through the house, brushing the wood dust from her hands and shaking drops of water from her skirt. She had not noticed Frances' approach, and was taken somewhat by surprise. These two women had never seen each other before, but their recognition was mutual and complete.

"How do you do?" said Frances in her softest voice, "I came over to see if there is anything I can do for you."

FRANCES AND KOTINGO

Kotingo smiled and shook her head, then smiled again. She opened the door, motioning Frances to come in, and led the way to the sitting room. Here she offered Frances a chair and seated herself in another; this much of western civilization she had absorbed.

"The house has changed a good deal," observed the American, looking about the empty room and hallway. Excepting the two chairs they occupied the front part of the building was as empty as the Kraemers had left it when they moved away with all their household effects. The accumulations that come into untenanted rooms were everywhere.

Kotingo's childlike expression turned to a charming frown. "No English," she said. Indicating by gesture that she would return she left the room, and presently her voice was heard, calling. She was trying to throw together unfamiliar consonants to form the word "Johnnie."

It was not long before a boy of twelve put in an appearance. He was barefooted, dressed in full length overalls and a soft tan shirt, just as any farmer child. While he explained that Kotingo must watch the fire, but would soon return, Frances studied him intently, wondering to what race of mankind he belonged. He was not a Japanese, he was not a Caucasian; she thought of unfamiliar Asiatic peoples, Malay, or Korean or Aino. Then the truth flashed upon her. She saw the characteristics of two races, and she realized that he was half Aryan and half Mongolian.

THE INTERLOPERS

The Japanese influence was predominant, for that side of his ancestry had been bred true to type centuries and centuries more than had the other. The longer such a process continues the more firmly impregnated become the racial traits, while on the other hand stock that has repeatedly taken in new blood has no tendency to uniformly transmit any qualities not common to all the forefathers. It is an established principle of animal breeding that the thoroughbred strain will prevail over the mongrel, or the stronger of two pure breeds over the weaker. The same truth applies to human beings, for after all, the body in which we dwell is purely animal.

So there were in this Johnnie the cephalic index of the yellow race, the straight, coarse hair, flattened nose, the almond, sloping eyes. Yet every feature showed a little of the white; the very ease with which he pronounced English words, and his occasional gestures, proclaimed some Saxon blood.

"Do you go to school?" Frances asked, overcoming a stifling repugnance. To her he was something unclean, an unnatural violation of the laws of the universe. The instinct which lies against mating with one's immediate family is only one of many formulated to preserve the race. Perhaps the most horrible thing which the human mind can conceive is the nearly impossible but not absolutely unknown cross between man and beast. Something of the inborn horror which that thought induces follows in the wake of a half-breed such as Johnnie, whose

FRANCES AND KOTINGO

ancestral traits on either side are so distinct that a compromise between them is impossible.

"We are having vacation," replied the boy. He obviously recalled the thoughts of school life with little pleasure.

"Do you live in Rosario? I have not seen you before."

"I came from Los Angeles for the summer." Home, too, seemed to bring back unpleasant recollections. So the tender hearted girl, trying to find a safe subject, asked him what work he was doing.

"Grubbing salt bush," he answered.

"Do you like Eden Valley?" She was thinking of the tenacious vine, half as large as the child, which clings so closely to the tree trunks that no plow can reach it; and of long hours spent in the sun wielding a heavy mattock.

"I like the work," he said, "but not the people."

"Are you not treated well?" She was all concern.

"Nobody wants me." He was responding volubly to the first kind interest he could remember. "The white men say that I am nothing but a dirty coolie, they will not speak to me, and their children are not allowed to play with me."

"And your own people?"

"Who are my own people?" The outcast had brooded so long over what he was saying that words came easily. "Those I live with are all too proud to have anything to do with me; even my mother's relatives would be ashamed to be seen where I am. I work alone. I eat alone. If I try to talk, no one

THE INTERLOPERS

answers; if I try to play no one will let me come near."

Frances was a woman before she was a philosopher. She drew a poor, crumpled, weeping lad to her lap, and tried to comfort him, while there dawned upon her an entirely new point in this complex situation. The south, she knew, was overrun with half-breeds. The white man has left the same trail of his presence scattered to the four corners of the earth. But the superiority of the conqueror is always recognized and accepted. His offspring is raised among the mother's people and becomes one of them, and is always a bit more respected because of his quota of the nobler blood. Not so with these proud Japanese, to whom their own race superiority was a fetish. She remembered having heard that even in Hawaii they preserved themselves pure and intact to an incredible degree. Such a thing is done only by a people who are, or believe themselves to be, vastly superior. Then her thoughts turned to the Gulf states again, and she was trying to picture some proud, aristocratic family accepting a mulatto, when the boy sprang guiltily to his feet, for Kotingo was in the room.

"She says that I am to translate for her," he said, after a few native words had been exchanged.

"Tell her that I came over as a friend to see how she was living and to help her if I could."

Kotingo's welcome was warm and sincere. She knew there was almost an inconceivable field wherein the American could instruct her, a fact which neither

FRANCES AND KOTINGO

precedent nor the vanity of her people forbade her to admit. And while she was greedily storing her mind with countless little everyday things which you and I have grown to accept as matters of course, but of which she was profoundly ignorant, Frances was being rewarded by accumulating knowledge which, though hardly useful, was picturesque and interesting.

There were the chop-sticks, for instance, used by all the latest arrivals. Those who had been long in this country had adopted our cutlery, a fact which was a distinct disappointment. Frances had unknowingly counted on finding a bit of transplanted Japan, while for the greater part what she really saw was a crude attempt to imitate. As forks had been adopted by some so also had chairs. Benches were placed beside the dining table, but the girl did obtain some solace when she learned that many of those who used them sat cross-legged.

Out of respect to her the bathing had been discontinued, so she was able to investigate the kitchen and the back yard. She learned, partly from observation, partly from direct questioning, that in the care of their bodies, their hair, and their teeth, these alien settlers were infinitely more particular than are we. With their linen all were not so careful, but here again the matter was largely determined by the length of time the individuals had been in this country.

Frances' interest was less in observing how far the aliens had adopted western ways than in search-

THE INTERLOPERS

ing for such native habits as they might still retain. She had never studied them particularly, it is doubtful if she had even read a book devoted directly to their institutions, but Winfield had so often talked to her about them that she felt herself fairly well acquainted with the customs and habits of thought of the Japanese. In Edward she had found a sympathetic critic. He was too clever to blind himself to their shortcomings, too cosmopolitan to endow them either with faults or virtues they did not possess. The girl, of course, reflected his views.

The Japanese at home, as a nation, are sadly lacking in the ability to cast aside serious thoughts in their moments of leisure. Their pleasures and recreations are heavy and ponderous, but even such as they are, they had not been brought across the ocean. Attempts to adapt themselves to American pastimes were hardly successful, for our sports have been evolved to meet our national characteristics and are worth while only if they become an anodyne for troubles. Perhaps the idea could be expressed by saying that our object is to become carefree, theirs to attain proficiency.

Edward had many times pointed out to Frances that comparisons between the two countries cannot be other than unfair, because we are able to judge only by our own standards. "Just think what would happen," he had once said to her, "if we tried to measure ourselves by theirs. Filial devotion, patriotism, love of the beautiful, patience, self-sacrifice and perseverance, piety, ceremonial observances,

FRANCES AND KOTINGO

and courtesy, the world at large concedes that those are admirable qualities. Would you care to have the two civilizations ranked according to their relative observation of them? Yet that is just as reasonable as to pick our best attributes and then condemn the Japanese because they do not conform to them."

The quaint and the picturesque was to be found in abundance, but only by search and segregation from the sordid commonplace. Small kegs of rice fastened in wisps of straw certainly held fascinating suggestions, but the effect was weakened by placing them on a shelf that also held canned tomatoes. Two prints brought from home were on the wall. One of these showed only a branch with the moon in an upper corner, the other a sloping hillside with a solitary tree. If one could disregard the other articles in that dining room, there stood revealed the handling of detail and the daintiness that has made the Japanese as a race in their own way the most artistic in the world.

In the bed chamber which Kotingo and Saishoto were fortunate enough to have to themselves, there was nothing not purely American, and yet the Japanese influence was so strong that Frances could almost picture herself in the land of the cherry blossom. On a cheap pine washstand stood a vase, a simple one of clay, costing not over a dime. It contained two branches of honeysuckle, one of which drooped over the edge, the other stood erect to a height somewhat less than two feet. In that simplicity was revealed the national trait in art. No

THE INTERLOPERS

western housewife could have so arranged her flowers. She would not have had the training nor would she have given the time and thought necessary to obtain the effect, even had she been born with the requisite eye for line and color. So it was with the arrangement of the furniture. There was no overcrowding, and yet the concomitant bare spaces were pleasing and restful. Every article in the room bore the proper relation to every other, revealing unlimited patience and close attention to detail no less than a highly developed temperament.

Kotingo opened a drawer, to show the few simple possessions she had brought. A carved ivory elephant was typical of the nation's love of miniature. But it told also of patience and care almost superhuman, as well as of extraordinary finger skill and technique. So it was with a couple of pieces of pottery and a bit of lacquer; simplicity in every sense, in subject and treatment, in color and shape, above all in arrangement. The greatest of her treasures was a silk kimono, made and embroidered by hand. It was a commentary on the nation that produced it, revealing perseverance and attention to detail, artistic perception and skill, the consideration given small things, in a word, the soul of the nation.

As Frances wandered homeward she pondered deeply on what she had seen. She felt that she could now visualize what Edward had told her, that she could now appreciate the best that was in these little yellow men. And that best was not to be belittled. Their inconsistencies perplexed her, their

FRANCES AND KOTINGO

extreme frugality on one hand compared with a lavish expenditure of time on the other, their seriousness of purpose contrasted with their carefree and laughing loving natures. She was gifted with the power of reason far more than are most women, and her thoughts, running here and there at random, eventually brought her two firm convictions.

The first of these was that a greater appreciation of the Japanese did not entail a lessened antipathy for them as neighbors and competitors. More clearly than ever did she understand the injury they could do her beloved California, injury without recompense, for while the nobler attributes were undisputedly lovely, by their very nature they were incapable of being transmitted to or uplifting the whites.

The other picture was an unlessened repugnance of Johnnie. For years the shock of meeting him had its effects on her sensitive nature, nor could she hear any reference direct or indirect to the assimilation of the Japanese without there being recalled the horror of her first impressions.

The result of the morning was to leave her more firmly convinced than ever that the interlopers were an unmitigated injury to the Pacific coast. And granting the premises, she could not see why they should be allowed to settle here, for she did not recognize any obligation on her part to sacrifice herself for them. And if the truth be told, there are millions of others who are wondering why west-

THE INTERLOPERS

ern America should be called upon to help support Nippon.

Youth and springtime swung her thoughts to herself and to Robert. Without weakening any of her own beliefs, the morning had brought her a greater sympathy with his point of view. It was not that she was seriously considering any change in her own conduct, it was rather that she was understanding better why Robert had found his own course so imperative. She was still weighing the matter in her mind when she arrived at her home.

Ruth was in the kitchen preparing lunch. So Frances promptly filled a pan with potatoes, which she proceeded to peel.

"I've done something this morning which will surprise you," said the elder sister, with a reminiscent look in her eyes.

Ruth was reaching into the closet for some plates. "What was it?" she asked, her mind on her work.

"I went to Yokohama to make a call on Kotingo."

The younger sister almost dropped her handful of dishes. "Why?" was all she could articulate.

"Because I wanted to." There was no rebuff in the answer.

Ruth emptied her hands and came across the room. "Now tell me why?" she coaxed. "Was Robert there?"

"No," half angrily.

"But he'd something to do with it."

"Nothing at all. I went because—oh, well, I don't know, because—"

FRANCES AND KOTINGO

"Never mind, I know why. Are you two going to make up?"

"I'm not even considering it."

"I believe you are." Ruth gave her an affectionate hug, and added as an afterthought, "I hope you do."

But then she could not foresee any distractions or complications.

CHAPTER XXII

DOROTHY TIBBETTS' WEDDING

“**A**CCORDING to the law of chances,” said Edward Winfield to Billy Evans, “supposing it’s one in five hundred that when a white girl and a yellow man are thrown into contact, he will do her some mental or physical injury; then if there are nine Japanese in a school with twenty-eight girls, the chance of some regrettable occurrence becomes a trifle greater than one to two. If you assume that this is annual, in a five year period the chance of an unfortunate happening becomes over seven to one, or almost a certainty.”

“How do you figure that?” asked Evans.

“It’s simple mathematics.”

“Where do you get your starting point, your one chance in five hundred?”

“I have to assume that. Just balance in your mind one against five hundred, concentrate on what a difference there is between the two, remember what you know of the morals of one side and the youthful foolishness of the other, and you will have to admit that my assumption is conservative.”

“You’re right, unquestionably,” said the engineer. “What conclusion do you draw?”

“Only this, that every few years, from almost every school situated as is ours, there’s going to be a terrible heart-break in some family. Mothers will

DOROTHY TIBBETTS' WEDDING

persist in exposing their daughters, or rather the nation compels them to do so. The very people who most obstinately blind themselves to the facts are the ones to be most volubly shocked at the working out of the laws of the universe."

"Then you think that something will happen in Rosario?"

"Seven chances out of eight, Billy. There isn't a ripple on the surface today, but no one knows how rapidly we've been exhausting our factors of safety."

"We've already had one regrettable happening," Bill objected.

"You mean when Sango frightened Ruth Coulters? That hardly counts, for it was a misunderstanding all around."

"It didn't seem such a trivial matter at the time."

"My one in a hundred means something real, not just a mistake."

"What do you think of the Japanese question? You appear to have studied it deeply."

"There is just one solution, unless the west is to have a far more serious race problem than the south. This country has to recognize, and make other countries accept the fact, that it is a question of race, not of citizenship. If we pass a law which prohibits all people of Asiatic blood from coming to this country, from settling here or owning land, and do so frankly because they are Mongolian, Malay, or Hindu, we are not excluding the citizens per se of any country. If a large proportion of the Japanese and Chinese are Mongolians, that is a

THE INTERLOPERS

mere coincidence. We will always welcome such of them as are of Indo-Aryan origin. We will exclude all Japanese, whether they are citizens of Japan or not, all Chinese, whether citizens of China or not, all Malays and Indians, whether citizens of Great Britain or not, but we most decidedly do not exclude all citizens of Japan, China, or Great Britain. Citizenship has nothing to do with it, every nation in the world is treated alike."

"But they tell us that if we do so and stick to it, Japan will declare war," Billy suggested.

"There is far smaller probability of war if we act at once and are consistent, than there would be with a million or two Japanese on our coast, for the more of them there are the more is their competition felt, the more desperate the whites become the greater grows the friction, and hostilities thereby become a certainty, for sooner or later her people will suffer affronts that Japan will not overlook."

"How about our own citizens who are of Japanese blood? They are being born here by the thousand every year."

This conversation ended with the sudden appearance of Frances Coulters. Evans sprang to his feet, even Winfield endeavored to rise, while both looked at the girl for an explanation.

"It's about Dorothy Tibbetts," Frances began breathlessly. "Mrs. Scott was looking for some old patterns of hers in Dorothy's room, and came across a bundle of letters, all in one handwriting and all postmarked Seattle. The addresses looked

DOROTHY TIBBETTS' WEDDING

so queer, so unlike any other writing she had ever seen, that Mrs. Scott became suspicious. She opened one of the letters and read it. They were all from Takase; Dorothy is to meet him in Seattle, to marry him."

Frances dropped into a chair and began to weep quietly. "She is such a sweet girl," she managed to say.

"What are your father and mother doing?" Edward asked her.

"Father had some business in San Diego and mother went with him. Ruth and I were alone when Mrs. Scott came over, and I didn't let my sister hear a word."

"How about Donald?"

"Bessie has gone for him, but he's in Eulalia looking at pasture. It'll be hours before they get back. So I came to you."

"Drive Frances over to the school," said Winfield to Evans. "I believe she can talk Dorothy out of this and no one in Rosario ever be the wiser. If you can't do that," he continued, turning to the girl, "under no circumstances let her leave you until Donald returns. Billy will help you if necessary. Now hurry, but before you go tell me where I can find Dorothy's mother."

"She's in the town of Glendale, north of Los Angeles."

"Do you know her first name?"

"No, Dorothy has never mentioned it to me."

THE INTERLOPERS

"Never mind, I will reach her any way. That's all. You won't forget what you have to 'do?'"

"You'll find us together no matter where she goes."

Winfield summoned his nurse as soon as they had left him. "Daggett, run down to the village as fast as you can. Get the Los Angeles Taxicab Co. on the telephone, ask for Mr. Reardon, and tell him to find a Mrs. Tibbetts in Glendale. The Mrs. Tibbetts we want is the mother of our school teacher. Have him tell her that she must drop everything and come at once, because her daughter needs her terribly. Tell Reardon to disregard all speed laws, and to bring the old lady here just as fast as he can. He knows me and he will do precisely what he's told. Then try to talk to Mrs. Tibbetts over the wire. Tell her who I am, that I cannot explain to her, for I'm not even telling you. Do you understand what to say to her?"

"Yes sir, I think so, sir."

"As you go out, tell Val to answer my bell. It's a fine thing," he continued to himself, "to be as helpless as a baby in such an emergency as this. Well, Mrs. Tibbetts should be here between three and four, Donald will be back about the same time, and Frances won't leave Dorothy. I know the breed. If that little teacher slips by all those people, Billy and I will stop her by force if necessary. The most that can be done to us is to be fined a few dollars for abduction or false imprisonment, or whatever it will be called. If she should escape us all and

DOROTHY TIBBETTS' WEDDING

leave Rosario, Sam could still stop her in San Diego.

"So much for the time being, but this must be made a permanent job. Allowing everything possible for the girl's being in love, I am sure she can't stand up against the battery that is to open on her this afternoon. Some women might, but never Dorothy. Still it can do no harm to have a couple of detectives shadow her for the next few months, although I know that it's not necessary. In the meantime, I'll get a report on this Takase. I'll buy him off in some way if I can. As a last resource, I'll have him deported, on a trumped up charge if I have to. After all, money and influence are good things to fall back upon at times."

When Frances and Billy reached the school house, Dorothy was not to be found. She had gone home during the morning recess, they learned, and was still away.

The children didn't know what to do, so they were playing about listlessly, waiting for their teacher. Without delay Frances and her escort drove to Donald's home, watching for Dorothy on the way. They didn't meet her, neither was she at the Scott place. After a hurried search of the empty house, Frances rushed upstairs to Dorothy's room. It looked as though a tornado had swept through it. Drawers were opened and half emptied, articles of wearing apparel were scattered about indiscriminately, the closet door was ajar, furniture was awry, everything indicated frantic haste.

THE INTERLOPERS

"She's gone," panted Frances, hurrying back to the buggy. "Drive to the station as fast as you can. She must have seen that her letters had been opened, and so she's running away."

"The train has already gone," said Evans, looking at his watch.

"Never mind, it may be late. And anyway, we must make sure."

They missed the train by many minutes. The station-master told them that Dorothy was aboard. She had driven up with one of Donald's horses, which the agent had obligingly promised to return in the evening. She had brought three heavy suit cases, for he remembered helping her put them on the car, and he had sold her a one way ticket to San Diego. It had all seemed very queer to him, but he'd not felt that it was his place to ask questions.

"It's not altogether unfortunate that your father is in San Diego," said Billy. "Do you know where we can reach him at this hour?"

"He'll be at the King Philip hotel. Drive back to the village."

Frances was nearly wild before she was in communication with the hotel.

"Is this Mr. Bredford?" she asked. "Frances Coulters is speaking. Is my father there? My mother, then? Do you know where they are? Could you find them if you sent out for them? Are you sure? Then I'm going to trust you with a message. You will absolutely never mention it to a soul? Thank you, I know you will not. Write this down:

DOROTHY TIBBETTS' WEDDING

'Our school teacher, Miss Tibbetts, left Rosario for San Diego on the noon train. She is running away to marry Takase, a Japanese store-keeper in Seattle.' Father and mother must meet that train, and they must stop her. Oh, will you really? I can never thank you enough. You do? Well, good-bye, and thank you again."

"He says," Frances had replaced the receiver and turned to Billy, "that since it's so very important he'll turn the desk over to his clerk, and find father himself. Mr. Bredford is so nice."

From the time that Mrs. Scott had burst in with the agonizing news until Dorothy's flight was discovered, Frances had been a slightly rattled and badly frightened girl, eager to drop her burden on the shoulders of others. But no sooner had she left that disordered room than she had taken upon herself the leadership of the whole affair. She endeavored to do as would have been done by the father whom she so greatly admired. Partly from association and heredity, partly from conscious imitation, she was thinking and acting, even to little details, so exactly like Sam that Billy slipped in under the spell, and found himself taking orders just as unhesitatingly as though it were Coulters in person who was directing.

Indeed, it required an effort to suggest to her that men in business were trained to take no chances, and that it seemed as though she were depending altogether too much upon Bredford's being able to find her father.

THE INTERLOPERS

"He is sure to," she answered. "He knows that father is keeping an appointment with Mr. Barlow, and he heard father promise mother that the very minute they left the bank they would go to the Fifth Street department store. I know mother when she is shopping; she will keep father there an hour."

"I guess it's safe," Billy admitted. "Suppose we go back to Edward and report?"

Winfield accepted very calmly their explanation of how they had failed to carry out instructions. After Edward had told of having sent for Mrs. Tibbetts, and after both men had praised Frances until she blushed, it was arranged that Billy should drive to the village and get in touch with Sam and tell him about Mrs. Tibbetts' coming. Then Evans was to pick up Ruth, and the four would have luncheon with Winfield. In the meantime, Daggett would wait at Donald's house to bring back both the Scotts as soon as they arrived.

It was a long time before Ruth and Evans appeared. Billy could not get San Diego on the wire at all at first, so he had gone for Ruth. On the way back he talked to the clerk of the King Philip hotel. Bredford had left word that he had been unable to reach Sam, for the Coulters had suddenly changed their plans and had left for home on the early afternoon train.

"Then they and Dorothy have crossed," wailed Frances. She pulled herself together in a moment. "I'm going to tell Rutherford White. He will stop her for us, I know he will."

DOROTHY TIBBETTS' WEDDING

But in an hour or so she returned, having been unable to locate White. He was somewhere in the city, but neither in his office nor in any of his accustomed haunts was a trace of him to be found.

Before the next move had been as much as thought of there was a cloud of dust in the garden, the squeak of brakes and the rattle of machinery. A nervous, fragile little woman, tired and travel-stained, could hardly wait long enough to alight before asking for Dorothy. Ruth and Frances took her to a room upstairs, where they cleaned and freshened her while they broke the news. Billy and Edward, meanwhile, were looking into each other's haggard faces, steadily and silently. Presently there came from above a scream indescribably suggestive of mental agony. It was followed by the noise of weeping, subdued, long-continued sobbing. Winfield's sensitive nature responded to every sound, and even Evans, hardened slave driver that he was, no longer tried to check the tears that were rolling down his cheeks.

Edward rang his bell and Val appeared. "I want Harper," said the master. When the ranch foreman came in, Edward gave him his orders in a few curt words. "Mr. and Mrs. Scott are coming down from Eulalia. Go with Reardon to meet them. I want him to bring them to me. You are to drive their horses home. Then I want Reardon to meet the San Diego train and bring the Coulters here."

"Can you imagine anything more awful," he continued, after the man was gone, "than for this girl

THE INTERLOPERS

to have no one to talk to through life except Takase, to forever see him only across her table, to submit to his caresses by day and by night—”

“We have got to stop this.” Billy was listening no less to Edward than to the agony from the room overhead.

“We will, if my money and your strength can do it.”

It wasn't long before the arrival of the others, the Scotts and the Coulters. The girls brought Mrs. Tibbetts down to join the council of war. Plan after plan was brought up and discussed, the while everyone waited until Sam should promulgate his ideas.

“The girl must be arrested,” he said at length. “Surely there is some small bill that remains unpaid. We'll charge her with leaving the state with intent to defraud her creditors. The police—”

“No! You shall not. My girl shall not be arrested like a common thief. Do you think I could consent to having a policeman touch her, perhaps put her in jail?”

Frances and Mary Coulters placated the old lady, and they even persuaded her to promise to swear out the warrant. Meanwhile, Billy and Sam fell to discussing avenues of escape. “If she goes by sea,” said Evans, “she must stop in San Francisco, and if by land she will have to go on the Southern Pacific, through Sacramento. If we have those two points watched she can't escape.”

DOROTHY TIBBETTS' WEDDING

"She owes us a few weeks' board," said Donald. "Will that do as a pretext for her arrest?"

"Yes," said Sam. "Assign it to Mrs. Tibbetts; if the child is stopped by her own mother it will hurt her the least."

So everything was settled. Mary Coulters took the little widow with her, while the others scattered to their homes or to their apportioned work. Edward and Billy undertook to put private detectives on Dorothy's trail, and Sam was to set in motion the machinery of the law. Places were gone over and checked again. No loophole was left that even an experienced criminal could have found. Then everyone concerned waited patiently until the net should close on the teacher and bring her back to her loving friends.

As the days slipped by with no word from the fugitive, the little group in Rosario grew more and more perplexed, though only the mother was really worried. Two weeks passed, during which every steamer, train and auto stage was watched. The dens of Tijuana were searched, San Diego itself raked as with a comb, and every seaport and every point of exit from the state were guarded. In the meantime, Takase had been arrested, his admission papers had been held faulty, and he had been deported.

Another fortnight passed before a cablegram from Yokohama unravelled the mystery. An hour after reaching San Diego, with no one the wiser, Dorothy had steamed out of the harbor on a tramp

THE INTERLOPERS

schooner bound for Mazatlan. There she had transhipped to a liner which took her straight to Japan. Takase had met and married her the moment she put foot on shore.

One can hardly regret that her subsequent fate is unknown. Edward Winfield had investigations made, but he carried to his own grave the secret of those revelations. Poor Dorothy!

The last chapter of this tragedy was written the day the cablegram arrived. Late that evening the door of Winfield's den opened quietly to admit a pitiful wreck of manhood.

"I saw your light," Charles Essing began, apologetically. But he could not control himself. "Is this true—what I hear about Dorothy?"

"I'm afraid it is, old man, absolutely true."

"Take this!" Essing tossed a large envelope into the invalid's lap, and disappeared into the night.

Edward found in the package a short note, asking him to dispose of the Essing homestead as best he could and send the proceeds to a Mrs. Charles Essing, Sr., at an address given in Kennebunk, Maine. Accompanying this request was a perfectly executed deed for the property running from Charles Essing to Edward Winfield.

There will be no postscript describing a desolate home in Glendale, for the simple reason that no one reading could appreciate, even in part, the sufferings of that heart-broken widow.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE OTHER WOMAN

THE Rancho Rosario dated from the days of the Spaniards. The original grant included the entire valley, and league upon league of the surrounding hills. Cattle and horses in great herds, with burros and mules in lesser numbers, grazed over this vast acreage, were in fact its only product. When the development of the state and the concurrent increase in taxation had made the cattle industry unprofitable, this great rancho succumbed to the same fate that had overtaken many another—it fell into the hands of land speculators, and was subdivided into five and ten acre tracts.

Once upon a time the central group of buildings had housed a hundred souls, but years and the elements had changed adobe walls back again into adobe fields. There remained only one building, a comparatively modern frame cottage, to connect the present with the past. From time to time improvements had been made that brought this house more nearly up to date, but even so, only at rare intervals was it occupied by its owners.

When there arrived several wagon loads of furniture consigned to the old ranch house, the Rosarians were not surprised that once again the place had been rented. In due course, there came a number of trunks, accompanied by two servants, and for days

THE INTERLOPERS

there proceeded the work of installation. Then, late one afternoon, a large touring car drew up before the cottage, and the Richardsons of Chicago were duly installed in their new home.

Mr. Richardson remained only a day or two, just long enough to see his wife settled, and to satisfy himself that she would be properly cared for by Dr. Hollington. She had broken down, explained the husband, under the strain of a life of pleasure, and had been exiled for a six-month period of rest.

Soon the residents of the valley became accustomed to the sight of an open car wandering about their roads. Few people could as much as claim a speaking acquaintance with Mrs. Richardson, and yet all were proud that among them there was such a handsomely gowned woman, such an aristocrat. She was not strikingly pretty, and besides ten years of late hours and mild dissipation had left their signatures across her features. Nature had been neither stingy nor prodigal with her, for while there was nothing about either face or figure that repelled, even remotely, there was little that was strongly attractive, unless it were her eyes. They were soft, alluring, fascinating, they spoke alternately interest, admiration, wonder, or sympathy at the owner's will, and when they flashed upon a man they always thrilled him, and usually made him try to bring back their light once more. That may have been nature or it may have been art, for in art the lady left small room for improvement. Her complexion was the result of two hours of daily work, her teeth were as

THE OTHER WOMAN

perfect as dentistry could make them, small, regular, and brilliantly white. Her hair was a constant tribute to her maid, her clothes accentuated everything desirable about her figure; in a word, her grooming was complete, for she had the happy faculty of combining style with good taste.

Dr. Hollington was thrown closely in contact with her by his daily visits. Treating such an obscure ailment as hers was not a matter of taking temperature and pulse or of prescribing drugs. He had to talk with her about little intimate things of life, to urge her, often to compel her to do as he wished. His stronger will so readily conquered hers that she soon found herself depending on his advice and support in matters not even remotely connected with hygiene. She reciprocated to the limit of her ability by the interest she showed in his work, an interest which more often than not resulted in her visiting his sick and doing whatever she could for them, whether reading to them, or giving an outing to them, or taking delicacies to them.

Robert was in love with Frances, and furthermore he was a man of intense singleness of purpose. For him there was no other woman, there could be none. Mrs. Richardson was fascinating, perhaps her greatest charm lay in the extreme development of the feminine side of her nature, and yet to Robert she was sexless. Though he attempted no critical analysis of her, he could not help realizing that vanity was her ruling passion. He recognized her type as one with which he had once been somewhat familiar,

THE INTERLOPERS

knew in a vague way that her married life had been a long series of small triumphs, that she had always had at her beck and call at least one more or less devoted suitor, and that even in her present seclusion it was highly probable that a new admirer would spring out of the new environment. To have thought that he himself would be the one to be singled out for the purpose would have required a more liberal allotment of conceit and self-consciousness than he possessed.

So he unsuspectingly accepted at its face value her freely given help. He grew to believe that her butterfly existence had been forced upon her, as she proved to him by hard work that her natural instincts lay in the direction of making her life of value to herself and to others. She kept very much aloof from him, kept their relations as impersonal as circumstances would permit, the while there grew in him, he could not have told how, a feeling that she was very sorry for him for being buried out in this neck of the world, for missing not merely the pleasures that large cities offer, but also the substantial rewards that his undoubted ability would have won in any of the great centers of population. So it was with subtle sympathy and subtle flattery that Mrs. Richardson started her campaign to bring to her feet the most attractive unattached man in the neighborhood. At the proper time she allowed Robert to understand that her husband had not been as attentive as he should have been, that the married couple were not congenial. Never by any chance did a

THE OTHER WOMAN

word of criticism pass her lips, nor was a suggestion of the sort made directly; on the contrary Robert did not believe that she even suspected him of knowing the secret.

Pearl Richardson was a woman whose actions had always been above reproach. None of her victims had ever had a touch, a look, or a word of affection, except in the most motherly sort of way. Playing the game as she played it; it was necessary not only to remain undefiled, but to be generally credited with so doing. The companionship of women must be cultivated, in spite of the fact that to one of her type womankind had little to offer. Mrs. Coulters and her daughters must be placed under such a debt of obligation that even if their friendship was not won they would still be estopped from passing judgment upon her. It was not at all difficult for Mrs. Richardson to coöperate with Mary Coulters in care of the sick and in many acts of mercy. The daily drive in the big car was prescribed and it soon became more customary than not for Mrs. Coulters, and often one if not both of her daughters, to be seen in the tonneau. They all became very much attached to my lady bountiful, for she was alluring and sympathetic, and willing to put herself to any amount of trouble in her unselfish efforts to help others.

All the time this cold, calculating woman was protecting herself against attack from the rear. So skilfully did she intrench herself that even when Frances grew to dislike her, no suspicion of insin-

THE INTERLOPERS

cerity flashed through the young girl's mind. Indeed, there was not one of the women who established public opinion in Rosario but had found Mrs. Richardson at all times graciously condescending, at all times loyal in her praise of her husband, at all times willing to do hard work with no apparent motive other than goodness of heart. Had the occasion ever arisen which demanded a champion for her, there would have been no dearth, but her part had been played too well for such a necessity to arise. There were few people in Eden Valley who would accept favors unless they could repay with a loyalty both of word and thought.

Just how a conquest which could only be on the surface, which was never intended to be deeper, one which was a tribute to skilful manipulation rather than personal attractiveness, one which from its very nature was but a pretense, could satisfy the craving of vanity, is something which a normal mind can grasp only with difficulty. It must be a form of degeneracy, a mild and by no means uncommon form resulting from the overdevelopment of woman's longing for admiration. With the man of her choice at her feet, no matter by what means he may have been brought there and without regard to what significance is to be attached to his presence, her object is realized. Even though she knows that she has won nothing, her craving is gratified by appearances if the setting be artistically perfect.

His own simple honesty was Robert's only protection against this subtlety. The first stage of his

THE OTHER WOMAN

relationship with Mrs. Richardson was purely professional, the second came when he gladly embraced the opportunity she offered of bringing care and comforts to his sick. The third step unfolded slowly, coincidentally with her attentions to the women of Rosario. It found Robert on the basis of an intimate friend, coming freely to give or to receive advice. Then she endeavored to carry this friendship to a point where she would be indispensable to him.

She found if she concealed it sufficiently that he was readily susceptible to flattery. Accordingly she fed it to him as rapidly as she dared, though always indirectly. She knew that no male of his age but was proud to be seen in the company of a truly stylish woman, so she indulged him in that vanity, the more readily since she perceived the extra effort he was making in the care of his own person. She played upon his solitary condition by offering him the sociability and the many little refinements of life to which his early training had accustomed him. She studied his tastes in order to met them, in dress as well as in conversation. Other women would have understood that many a pose had been carefully rehearsed, mentally at least, that when she draped herself in an archway or became the foreground of an enticing picture the effects had been carefully studied in advance, but no man, least of all Robert, would have seen anything beyond the general result.

With all this, she would have had to have admitted failure had it been her nature to analyze.

THE INTERLOPERS

The most conspicuous sign of defeat lay in her bringing Frances' name into the conversation. Whenever Mrs. Richardson found the doctor's interest beginning to lag she would revive it by relating some incident connected with the Coulters family, and it was the hearing of these, or more often the mere hope of so doing, that frequently dragged him from his study or his experiments. Another confession came from her treatment of him in public, especially if close friends of the Coulters happened to be present. She would often show a little familiarity of manner, perhaps in the way she touched his arm, or it might be only in brushing a fleck of dust from his coat collar, but always there was given an impression of ownership, even while she knew the whole proceeding was grating the victim himself.

Of course, the affair created a furore in Rosario. The good people of the valley had never before seen anything of the kind, and they did not understand. Pearl Richardson had established her alibis with such pains that she was the target of almost no criticism. Her life was an open book to all, her character had been proven by her actions, and she was at the worst a victim of circumstances. Robert was the one who was censured, who was accused of everything from making a fool of himself to planning deliberately to take advantage of the husband's absence. As time went on the incident cost the young man more of his remaining friends than he could well afford to lose. A year before there would have been any number to have warned

THE OTHER WOMAN

him, but so greatly had he been misjudged during that twelve months, so bitterly had he been blamed for the aid he had given the Japanese, that no one took it upon himself even so much as to let him know that his conduct was disapproved.

Edward Winfield would have set him right at once, but Edward was away from home. Clem Harding tried to speak of the matter, but could not do so, and there were many others who had the doctor's interests at heart, but who, for one reason or another, kept silent. So Robert went serenely on his way, conscious of his own rectitude, knowing that neither by act nor thought had he transgressed even the strictest rules of propriety. It was not his nature to wonder how any act of his would appear to others, never had he asked himself what he would think if he were on the outside looking in on a man doing just as he was doing. He knew that he had set his standards much higher than the world demanded, knew that he lived up to them more unswervingly than any ordinary person, so he never dreamed that if he met his own tests any outsiders would as much as question what he had passed.

Frances understood the situation better than anyone else in the valley, for in San Clemente she had seen and heard discussed episodes not altogether different. Furthermore, she knew Hollington's character well enough to appreciate that he might be absolutely innocent and still act just as he was doing. Nevertheless, she was so disappointed in him and so

THE INTERLOPERS

hurt that she did not judge him fairly. We glory in the imperious pride of our womankind. When a girl like Frances is hurt she becomes angry, and if we are to be consistent and honor her for her pride, then we must not censure her because she does not calmly lay it aside the moment it is attacked.

If she had reasoned she might or might not have held Robert blameless, but she certainly would have remembered that he had no grounds for suspecting that she had seriously thought of sending for him. Of course, she denied to herself, denied vehemently, that she had ever more than lightly considered such a course, attributing her feeling on the subject to his unpardonable conduct in so placing her that she could not do this if she chose. His attachment for her had been so well known that she was furiously angry because she believed his lightly taking up this other affair exposed her to ridicule. If she felt as she did towards Robert, towards Mrs. Richardson her heart held hatred none the less bitter because it must be carefully masked. It is almost an axiom that women cannot compete in friendly rivalry, either in business or in love. In this case, Frances was sure that all the fault lay with the other woman, intuition told her as much, though she did not ever voice the belief nor try to prove it even to herself.

The inconsistency of maidenhood! She was angry with Robert, though she did not blame him. She resolved to punish him because he cared for another, and yet her punishment took such form that

THE OTHER WOMAN

it would hurt only in case he still loved her as of old. Since her return from San Clemente she had hardly spoken to Billy Evans. A sense of loyalty towards Robert, or some other undefinable feeling that it would not be right, had kept her from his company. But from now on she was continually seen with the engineer, often in the Richardsons' car, almost always where Mrs. Richardson might observe them, and, strangely enough, invariably accompanied by Ruth.

Frances, even in anger, could not have injured an innocent outsider. If her offended girlhood clamored for reparation that must be paid by the person at fault, and by no other. For a hundred centuries it has been the virgin's privilege to treat her suitor as she chooses; Frances felt no compunction whatever for Hollington. She may have promised herself to take out her revenge on any man she could, but in the last analysis her character was too fine, her sense of justice too strong. So, while she encouraged Billy to be with her, she let him see, from the very outset, that there had been no change in her feelings. She endeavored in every possible way to repay him by being entertaining and by doing things to interest him, and, if he were not satisfied with that, she was prepared to forego her entire program. And because she feared that in spite of every possible precaution her being alone with him might reawaken his passion, she planned that there should always be others with them.

THE INTERLOPERS

Billy was happy. The mine was running so smoothly that he had plenty of leisure, so he talked with Frances apparently content, flirted with Ruth, and openly made love to Mrs. Richardson whenever the opportunity offered, and so drifted on through the long summer days.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE COLLAPSE OF DONALD SCOTT

THE home of the Scotts was one of the oldest and best maintained in Rosario. The bungalow itself was small and the garden would hardly have crowded an unpretentious city lot, but the charm was in no way dependent on size. From the shape and color of the house to the selection and blending of the plants, everything proclaimed the individuality of the owners.

There were five rooms downstairs and one above, the latter snuggling in among the rafters. The roof ran with a graceful lessening pitch from the central gable to the generous overhang beyond the porch, where it was supported by small pillars spaced some ten feet apart. The building was painted a rather light green and trimmed with white. The color scheme was of relative unimportance, however, for the little cottage was fairly buried under a mass of bougainvillea, honeysuckle, and climbing rose. Besie had deliberately tried to obtain the impression that the structure itself was merely an arbor to hold the vines. The necessity of trimming the windows and the doorways had lessened this illusion, but there were places in the garden from which it was almost realized.

Surrounding the house was a thick hedge of cherokee rose, which enclosed the entire garden, except-

THE INTERLOPERS

ing the two palms that guarded the gateway. They had been but waist high when planted, long years before, on a day never mentioned but never forgotten, when Bessie had taken one and Donald the other, and bride and groom had simultaneously set the augury of their new home. Season after season the dead leaves had fallen back on the trunks, while the new growth, ever coming through the top, had climbed to a height that now exceeded thirty feet.

The garden itself was a hodge-podge of sizes. There were three or four ornamental trees that at one time had just fitted some bare spot, but were now grown out of all proportion to the yard, and were spaced with no apparent regard for each other. There were some clumps of papyrus almost as tall as Donald, some rose bushes surrounded by circles of cobble, and beds of pansies, of carnations, and geraniums, of sweet-peas and nasturtiums found a resting place against otherwise unoccupied walls. Now and again would appear an odd plant or flower, a gift or a souvenir, or just a fancy of the owner.

Underfoot, paths ran about aimlessly. There was no lawn, not even a weed, just the bare adobe baked hard, almost without shade beyond the confines of the porch. But the flowers thrived in the bright sunlight, color was everywhere, and a warmth of welcome awaited the wayfarer who entered the gates.

Such was the home of the Scotts. The pair were seated on their porch one Sunday afternoon. Bessie had been reading, but her attention was obviously

THE COLLAPSE OF DONALD SCOTT

more on her husband than on her magazine. At last she laid down the publication.

"I know you're having trouble," she said. "But you've not told me what it is. I suppose from your sitting there hour after hour with a paper and pencil, that you're figuring money matters. Whatever has happened, and no matter how serious or unpleasant it may be, tell me all about it so that we can meet it together."

Donald laid aside the sheet that he had covered with small numbers.

"Did you ever hear of a potato bug?" he asked.

"Yes; have they hurt our crop?"

"They have ruined it."

"Oh, Donald, what are we going to do?"

"That's what I am studying. If Dorothy were paying her board and if we'd been able to sell our potatoes for any fair amount, we would still not have had sufficient money, but we would have had nearly enough. What is the least we can possibly spend on ourselves until our orange crop is sold? Two hundred and fifty dollars?"

"We can try. I believe we can make it."

"Then there are our notes to meet, the bill for the seed potato must be paid, and our share of the spraying. There are taxes and interest on the mortgage and farm expenses. Altogether it adds to eighteen hundred and seventy-five dollars."

"What are you thinking of doing?"

"I'll go to San Diego tomorrow to see Farring.

THE INTERLOPERS

He bought our mortgage from the California Bank—”

“Donald, you didn’t tell me that!”

“I didn’t wish to worry you. I can handle the debt when it matures, for it has still a long time to run and the amount is very small, so small indeed that I believe Farring will let me have two thousand dollars more.”

“I’ve always understood that Barlow would not sell these mortgages.”

“His board of directors took the matter over his head and compelled him to do so.”

Scott easily found the firm of Farring and Harvey. Farring was a typical example of those brokers whose greatest asset is a consistent ability to meet every newcomer as though the latter were an old friend and a valued client. If Farring listened with the utmost sympathy to Donald’s request, and gave the appearance of being more than anxious to grant it, that was force of habit, nothing more. When the agent explained that he couldn’t do as he was asked, if he added that he undoubtedly would have done so, and have done so gladly, had the mortgage not already passed out of his hands, that was second nature pure and simple. He looked up his records to find that the present holder was McGowan, the lawyer.

It was with a heavy heart that the farmer crossed the blocks that lay between him and the law office that was fast becoming notorious. He went because there was still a chance that the attorney was acting

THE COLLAPSE OF DONALD SCOTT

for some one other than Hanba. Scott climbed the wooden stairs of a building that had been the pride of the city some thirty years before. The halls were wide and clean, but there was little light and no ventilation; the impression of an old-time prison went with him into the office rooms beyond. McGowan was out, and was not expected for another hour; the law clerk could not even consider divulging any further information. So Donald, having nothing further to do, sat in a chair and waited.

There was an interminable delay before the attorney returned. He listened patiently to the recital and at its conclusion promised to communicate with his principal. No, he would not divulge the identity of the latter, nor even tell whether or not he was a white man. McGowan placidly fell back on the confidential relations between lawyer and client. He refused to concede anything whatever, but did agree at last that if Donald would return at ten o'clock the next day there would be an answer.

On the following morning, anxiety and the strain of uncertainty showed on that weathered Scotch face. McGowan had the answer ready, it was an unembellished no. It left no possibility of extenuation, no room for argument, it left no opening either for pleading or for hope. So Scott went back to the street, to undertake the hardest task of his life. He had always led an upright life, had always been able to look straight into the eyes of any man or woman, and had never in all his fifty years had to cringe to anyone for a favor. Now

THE INTERLOPERS

he must have some money, money that he could not secure in the regular channels of trade, money that would come to him only if he violated the honor of a record of over half a century, only if he knelt down to beg for it.

He knew nothing about the procedure expected of him, but he had, in his strong honest face, an asset greater than any skill or experience. There were many who felt they honored themselves with his friendship, many merchants who, having traded with him season after season, regarded his probity as hardly second even to that of the banks. But the men among whom he circulated were small financially, and subject to many demands of a similar nature, so such of them as accommodated him at all gave but little. Nevertheless, the full amount needed was eventually raised, though by so narrow a margin that the farmer's borrowing capacity was exhausted, and the last few hundred dollars came with difficulty.

The conviction grew that McGowan was no longer acting for Hanba, but for some Caucasian who was following the system from which the Mongolian was barred by law. There was none of the subtle, intangible interference with Donald's efforts to raise money that had been experienced by so many of his unfortunate predecessors. When the task was completed and the last of the notes had been signed, when the mortgage was satisfied for the time by the payment of the taxes and interest, and he had been able to go home, the Scotchman, proud as he

THE COLLAPSE OF DONALD SCOTT

was of his own strength, sought the refuge of one who was even stronger. He told Sam of his experiences, of his belief that the white man was about to imitate the tactics of the yellow, and he smiled when he thought of what would become of that misguided one under the wheels of Coulters' Jugger-naut.

Donald would have been puzzled, but no less confident, had he known that his path had been followed among the commission houses and the dealers in farming supplies, and that on one pretext or another, usually of friendship, almost all of his paper had been purchased. Had he been behind the scenes a little deeper still, to see these notes pass into McGowan's hands, he might have suspected an enemy no less implacable than Hanba himself.

Any transaction with which McGowan was connected was apt to be of a dubious nature, so Sam Coulters was not free from a feeling of suspicion. He decided to call on Arthur Hancock, to see if any plots were being laid against the prettiest place in the valley.

Evangeline welcomed the old campaigner. "I was just thinking of you," she said, "I often do when I look over at the houses where my friends used to live. It was bad enough to have the Grahams go, but I just cannot reconcile myself to losing the Nortons."

"Your new neighbors do not look very attractive."

"They are not. Every angle of their housekeep-

THE INTERLOPERS

ing comes under my eyes, and all of it is objectionable. Their primitive ways, their crowding, their apparent destitution, is something that might seem picturesque for the moment, but it is horrible to have to live beside. Think of never having clean linen, of never filling a vase with flowers. Worse than that, they have habits that are so objectionable—I cannot even think of them, but they keep me almost entirely out of my front garden. And it used to be where I found my greatest pleasure.”

“They were trained to ideas of personal modesty that are very different from ours.”

“But can they not be made to respect our ideas? I am speaking for all the women in Rosario, not for myself alone.”

“If they were born beasts, no law can change them. Do you not find any compensations?”

“There are none. I am the happiest woman in the world, Mr. Coulters, and besides I naturally look on the bright side of things. If there were a single point to recommend those Japanese as neighbors, you may be sure I’d recognize and treasure it. Here is Arthur coming.”

“Welcome to our champion,” said the latter, half in earnest. “Are you out again on a still hunt for dragons?”

“I hope not, but there are a few questions I want to ask you. You must both promise to regard them as absolutely confidential.” The Hancocks nodded assent.

“Donald has just learned that the mortgage on

THE COLLAPSE OF DONALD SCOTT

his place was sold by the bank, and that it has passed into the hands of some undisclosed client of McGowan's. I want to know if any emissaries of that shyster have been around to see you, or any of your neighbors."

"No one has been near us or any of the others, as far as I know. How serious is Donald's predicament?"

"He's as sound as a whistle. His mortgage has a long time to run, his interest is paid for three months to come, and he's money enough to meet his current bills. There's no reason for feeling uneasy, and we particularly wish to avoid starting a rumor. I'm asking you these questions only as a matter of extra precaution, and to get a possible line on who bought Donald's mortgage."

We're an inconsistent people, we Americans. In many respects our ideals are so high as to remind one of the days of chivalry as we pictured them when we were children. Let a baby be lost in any spot, city or country, except possibly one of those unfortunate districts where crying infants are of such frequent occurrence as to be unnoticeable. The point will be illustrated by the conduct of the first passer-by, whether scrub-woman or silk-hatted magnate. In some respects, we are so low as to shame the savages, as witness for one, among the multitude of examples, child labor in our factories. Millions of dollars worth of merchandise are sold every year under such circumstances that the buyer and the seller trust each other, have only a verbal agreement

THE INTERLOPERS

regarding price. Yet let any two of them write out a contract, and if they're both careful business men, the paper will be drawn as though each regarded the other as an unmitigated rascal. But of all our inconsistencies the most glaring are the ethics of commerce, the tricky acts that are permissible, and the no more objectionable ones that are beyond the pale.

So let's not judge harshly McGowan's client. By our standards his conduct was unpardonable, and yet Hanba had an honorable record. All his life he'd been a confidential agent, and without exception he had discharged his trusts in an exemplary manner. He found that in the United States there was being played a great game, where the stronger took from the weaker, the cleverer from the more simple. If here and there an opportunity were habitually allowed to lie idle, it may have been far more natural for him to suppose that this was the result—an oversight which his superior mind had grasped, rather than the result of an unwritten agreement that certain things should not be done.

Hanba was no weakling working with kid gloves. He was resourceful, he was ruthless, and he owed no allegiance except to the people he represented. When he struck it was with the suddenness of thought, with all the strength at his command. Donald Scott was sued on the promissory notes signed in San Diego, and the suit was accompanied by attachment proceedings which covered every scintilla of property that could be reached, including

THE COLLAPSE OF DONALD SCOTT

the bank account. The action was timed so that the check which paid the quarterly water rate had not yet reached the water company's office.

As is the custom, this payment was made on the last day of grace. The water company's clerk was warned by McGowan, so the check was taken directly to the bank, instead of being allowed to pass through the clearing house, with the consequent delay of twenty-four hours or more. When payment was refused, Donald, of course, became delinquent for the amount of his water dues. Trivial as that may seem, it allowed McGowan to foreclose the mortgage.

Then the lawyer sent for the farmer. Once again the latter journeyed to the city by the sea, once more he crossed its sunny streets and passed into the semi-darkness of the spider's hole. McGowan went over the situation. He showed Donald that there must be enough cash raised at once to meet the mortgages and fifteen hundred dollars in notes. He argued that no one from the outside would conceivably bid at the sheriff's sale, for the Japanese in the valley had precluded the possibility of new white settlers and had greatly depreciated values. He admitted that Donald would have the right to redeem within a year, but without a farm in his possession it would not be possible to secure the needed amount of ready money.

McGowan offered two thousand dollars in cash and all the notes in exchange for a deed. This offer, he explained, must be acted upon at once. It was

THE INTERLOPERS

made partly to avoid the expense and delay of litigation, partly to make redemption impossible in theory as well as in fact. If Donald fought and lost he would receive nothing, every rag and stick he owned would be sacrificed for those notes.

Scott asked for a week for consideration, so that he could consult his friends in Rosario, but was granted no more than the remainder of the day. So he returned to Bessie, who had come with him to San Diego. She suggested that either Hancock or Winfield might aid, but Edward had just left on one of his frequent trips to Denver, and the efforts to have Arthur come to a telephone were unsuccessful.

With this two thousand dollars they could live, and also continue the payments on Donald's endowment policy, so they would not be entirely destitute in their old age. Without it they faced starvation or the poor farm. Slowly grew the conviction in their minds that horrible as it was, McGowan's offer would have to be accepted.

When the news broke in Rosario that Donald Scott had fallen victim to the Japanese absorption, and that Arthur Hancock, finding himself surrounded, had likewise sold, the consternation of the citizens was pitiful to see. Those two men were among the strongest and most prominent in the settlement; resourceful and cool headed, they could not have been rushed into any hasty act. If they were not safe, then no security was to be had for anyone.

The name of the grantee in both deeds was Mari-

THE COLLAPSE OF DONALD SCOTT

shoto, a name hitherto unknown to the Rosarians. They were no less dumbfounded by this open attempt to override the new law than they were that men of such standing should have been attacked. No explanation came to the valley, for Donald and Bessie never returned. They wrote to many of their friends, but the letters told little of what had happened. Pages there were pregnant with the heartache, with love for the home and the valley, with regrets and misgivings, a few lines about the disposal of effects, but not a word of how it all had happened.

Little by little, the story leaked out, as such stories do. With it came the further knowledge that Marishoto was an infant, born near Fresno some three years before. And there lay the answer; he was a native of California, a citizen of the United States, and so not included within the scope of the anti-alien law.

"It all reminds me of a small dog I once saw chasing a ground owl," Clem Harding said to Winfield.

"What is a ground owl?" asked the invalid.

"You must have seen them; a little bird not much larger than a pigeon, that likes to sit in the sun. Sometimes he is on the mouth of one of his burrows, sometimes on a fence post; he always looks helpless, blinks as though blinded in the bright light, yet never misses anything on the broad horizon.

"This particular owl had three holes out in the center of an open hay-field. He was enjoying the

THE INTERLOPERS

air in front of one of them, when along comes a fool dog, who makes a rush at the owl, and when the bird takes to the air, runs after it just as fast he can. Of course he cannot keep up, but he sees the owl light by a hole not far away, so on he goes. When he begins to get too close the little ground owl bobs his head three or four times, then flies over to his third burrow. And because, when beasts do a thing once they are apt to do it the same way over and over again, the chase goes on, just as long as the dog can drag one foot after the other. That is like us after these Japanese; we always think we are about to catch them, but we never have any more chance than that dog."

CHAPTER XXV

THE DECLINE OF HOLLINGTON

HOLLINGTON had been called to Santa Rosa on a number of occasions, sometimes to treat patients of his own, but more frequently to consult with the local physician, a Dr. Hill. Robert had accepted his own superiority over the other as a matter of course, and had invaded the latter's bailiwick with the unformulated condescension of one who confers a favor. So it came as a very distinct shock to him to find the tables turned and the Santa Rosa doctor becoming a familiar sight on the streets of Rosario.

Dr. Hill had abandoned horse and buggy for a touring car. It is true that it had been bought second hand and was one of the cheapest makes; nevertheless its evident purpose was to enable its owner to care for his practice in Eden Valley. It first put in appearance not long after Frances had gone to San Clemente, when Sam's knee was so badly injured as to require dressing. But while it was not until after the publication of the letter to the state board of education that Dr. Hill was summoned by any other family, from then on he appeared with increasing regularity. To Robert's growing morbidness it was though every trivial act of his own was misunderstood and misconstrued, with the consequent loss of practice and clientele. He was

THE INTERLOPERS

blamed for matters beyond his control, beyond the scope of his knowledge, until it seemed that every one was seeking pretexts, and being satisfied with the most flimsy excuses, for severing friendly relations.

It hurt. If he were losing his practice to a more skillful competitor he would have been resigned, so he told himself. But Robert knew he had given satisfaction as a practitioner, and that all of these deflections were purely personal. Without exception they were the direct result of his having gone out of his way to make himself a useful citizen.

A doctor's practice cannot disappear as suddenly as can the trade of a merchant. Usually Robert was allowed to carry through any case he might happen to be treating. Then there would perhaps be no sickness in the patient's family for a long time, and so the head of the house ordinarily saw no occasion for exposing his hand. Sometimes months would elapse before Hollington would find that an apparent friend had been so far affected by a real or imaginary grievance as to choose another physician. If a nervous mother read of an unpleasant occurrence in a Stockton school, Robert was apt to be the scapegoat. If a merchant in Portersville failed because of Japanese competition, there was every likelihood of another house being closed to the Rosario doctor. If the melon growers of Brawley handed over their industry to the Mongolians, he would pay his part of the penalty.

THE DECLINE OF HOLLINGTON

One of the first results of this growing ill-feeling was that Hollington was forced to change his mode of living. He was unable to pay Mrs. Tilden her modest stipend for board, or her husband, who conducted the general merchandise store, for supplies that the small roadster demanded. And so it came about that the machine changed owners, and was converted into a delivery wagon.

Robert still maintained his offices, and as he had to eat he installed a small stove in one of the back rooms. From time to time Mrs. Tilden's daughter Edith came over to clean, or even to prepare meals for him. But he became less and less able to afford as much as that small luxury, and since there was no possible use trying to keep up appearances in so small a community, he very frankly did his own cooking.

His practice was rapidly becoming limited to the Japanese, the Indians, and the Mexicans who lived on the borders of the settlement. Mrs. Richardson remained under his care, so did Edward Winfield when the latter happened to be at home, and there was a sprinkling of other whites who braved public opinion, either from friendship or because of faith in him as a healer. But these last were pitifully few. At best a rural doctor has a slender income; the numbers within his reach are small; their out of door life keeps them relatively healthy, and their habits forbid them to call in payable assistance until it becomes necessary. When this small practice

THE INTERLOPERS

becomes shattered as was Robert's the residue is almost negligible.

One morning during these dark days a Japanese came to the housekeeping office. He introduced himself as Dr. Hosho Umiwinoru, a graduate of the imperial university of Kyoto, of the Harvard Medical school, and a former interne of the Red Cross hospital in Tokio. He had come to Rosario to settle, and was making a formal call. Hollington was greatly pleased. He welcomed the proffered friendship, he anticipated much from the promised intercourse, and this without a thought of the effect on his own prospects.

He was disappointed in every way. With that same lack of pride which allows a well bred youth to become a gardener or a cook, Dr. Umiwinoru assumed the role of a farm hand. He started his apprenticeship in this new vocation by attending the little streams of water that ran through the rows of trees. His evenings were devoted to medicine; it was only for a call of exceptional emergency that he would lay down his hoe. He was in America for the very serious purpose of making money. Any friendship that would make even slight demands on his time or energy was simply out of the question, and so, while there was no friction between the two doctors, their acquaintance made no progress beyond the initial meeting.

The Japanese part of Hollington's practice left him at once as a matter of course. The income he derived from his improvident Mexicans hardly cov-

THE DECLINE OF HOLLINGTON

ered the expense they occasioned, the cost of visiting them and the supplies he was compelled to furnish the indigents. There was really nothing he had on which to subsist except the nominal stipend which the government paid, and there was not the least prospect of an alleviation, so he resolutely set about to see if it were possible so far to change his habits of life as to accommodate himself to a few hundred dollars a year.

Outside recreation there was none except what Mrs. Richardson had to offer. He saw different members of the Cuyamaca tribe quite frequently to be sure, and he was so far reduced by loneliness that he tried to establish friendships with them. But the undertaking was hopeless, the differences too great, their natures too primitive. For instance, it was impossible to awaken in them any feeling of gratitude such as one sees in the southern negro. They were glad to take what he had to offer, whether it was something material or merely advice, and they would put themselves out to make it easy for him to give. But they received the gifts in just the same spirit as they would have accepted any stroke of good fortune, with no more sentiment or feeling or personal obligation than they would have entertained for a manifestation of nature, a timely rain for example, that saved a crop. Ingratitude, the white men called this racial trait, though Robert grew to regard it rather as a lack of mental development, grew to believe that the Cuyamaca mind

THE INTERLOPERS

was too feeble to generate anything so far removed from a purely animal emotion.

The natural reserve of the Indian, the superiority which he frankly conceded to the white man, and his total lack of interest in the doctor himself, effectively barred any relation of an intimate nature. Frustrated on every hand, Robert turned to his books and to work, where he found forgetfulness, if not happiness. He was soon deep in the study of the bubonic plague, fascinated by the romance of its history and appalled by its latent menace to the world. He became so interested that after exhausting his text-books and the government publications, he sent for cultures of the bacilli pestis, and bred guinea pigs on which to experiment.

There was no known cure or preventive for this affliction, and it was inevitable that Robert's investigations should soon bring him to the unsuccessful attempts of others to discover something effective. It was not long before he was making original experiments, impelled no less by interest than by his inborn love of mankind. He had not been embittered by suffering and injustice; he was too big a man, too strong for that. The impulses which Dr. Alling had awakened and directed had not been created during that memorable forty-eight hours; they had always been an integral part of the man himself, running so deep through his nature that they could have been destroyed only by a fundamental change. And there had been none; he was the same Robert Hollington, matured by knowledge and

THE DECLINE OF HOLLINGTON

experience, buffeted out of self-sufficiency, but unmarred by the loss of any ideal or the growth of a single hatred.

There came to him one day a letter. It was from an old friend and schoolmate, Randolph Palmer, Mrs. Pembroke's youngest brother. It told of a party that had been organized for a two-year cruise in and around South America, the Bering Sea, and the Orient. The trim little yacht *Sultana* had been chartered, and arrangements were now being completed to sail in about a month. Both of the Pembrokes, who were to be aboard at least part of the time, joined Randolph in urging Robert to join in the capacity of ship's doctor. When he read that note Hollington almost broke down. After all, he still had friends, the whole world was not against him. He began to picture in his mind the personnel of the expedition. He remembered well that Randolph was a prince of entertainers, and knew that the party would be composed of the most congenial people imaginable.

It would be the realization of one of Palmer's dreams, and Robert knew every detail of where they would go and what they would do, for as young men the two, smoking before a wood fire, had gone over the ground many an evening. Rio de Janeiro would be the first port of call, for they had decided to pass by all the islands and shores of the Caribbean. There would be excursions into unexplored portions of Brazil, hunting trips to Patagonia, and sight seeing in Chili. Northward would they go

THE INTERLOPERS

until stopped by eternal ice, where the great white polar bear would be added to their trophies. Then down the coast of Asia, filling their hold with souvenirs and acquiring reminiscences from many a spot where the white man was unknown. Ever southward to the cradle of the world, to study at first hand the oldest known civilizations.

The climax would come among the islands of the South seas, the enchanted fairyland of romance. What a wonderful opportunity, and what a contrast! Robert's eyes, roaming about his shabby office, fell upon a treatise devoted to the plague in India. He recalled a passage describing the first known recognition of the relation between the house rat and the epidemic. "When the vermin begin to fall dead from the roofs of the houses" ran the old proverb, "it's time for men to take to the hills." And surely the rats had been long dropping from the roof of his house.

So he wrote a letter of acceptance, but destroyed it because it revealed too clearly his destitution and his failure. He wrote another, only to tear it up as too formal. He had half completed a third mis-sive before he understood. The reason his compositions were so unsatisfactory was because he was not going; he could not go. Ever through his brain was running a melody, softly, sweetly, gently to himself he was singing and dreaming "Twilight in the Rose Garden."

CHAPTER XXVI

ARREST OF CLEM HARDING

THE Cleveland forest reserve includes the mountains lying to the east of the valleys. It is watched over by widely scattered forest rangers, men known chiefly by hearsay to the Rosarians, for the guardians of the woods seldom leave the higher levels. Their duty is to protect the timber from fire, so they pay but scant attention to the brush covered foothills. Therefore, some surprise was occasioned when a new warden, Ralph Harrison by name, made his headquarters in the village. All day long he was out on horseback over the hills, every evening he filled in and mailed a long report. He still found time to meet the good people of the settlement, and even make himself acquainted with some of the Cuyamacas and the Indians of a number of other tribes. Harrison was generally well liked. If he worked hard and was uncommunicative, that was not held against him, for the west has always respected a man who attends to his own business and seldom speaks of it.

Harrison was efficient, a fine rider and well mounted. He was versed in all the lore of woodcraft; nothing less was to be expected of a forest ranger. He was a more skillful tracker and a more expert reader of signs than was customary among his associates, and he differed from them, too, in

THE INTERLOPERS

that he had not acquired the repose that usually comes with days and weeks of solitary vigil. The newcomer was of a nervous temperament, with every movement quick and decisive. He had the air of a born fighter, exaggerated by an affectation of extreme care in arming himself. Whatever his warlike predilections, they remained in abeyance, for no one in peaceful Rosario could conceivably offer him a challenge.

For a month or two he had continued his work. Sometimes he would be out in the wilds for a week at a time, and often there were days together when he loafed about the village, feeding an apparently insatiable curiosity about every detail of his neighbors' lives, their movements, and their incomes. Had there been anything about the man to suggest incompetence he would have been disliked, and consequently shunned. But he had previously demonstrated that he had ability, so the feeling became general that he knew what he was doing, that he might safely be left to the exercise of his own judgment.

One day he took the train to San Diego. He offered no explanation, but none was expected or requested. Immediately on reaching the city he went to the office of the immigration bureau in the federal building.

"Hello, Farley," said the chief, "I want you to meet Mr. Gibson. He's a special agent from Washington, sent here to find out why we're not stopping the Chinese."

ARREST OF CLEM HARDING

"I'm very glad to meet Mr. Farley," said Gibson. "I'm told that you're the best out of doors man in the service."

Farley smiled deprecatingly. "Are they still coming across?" he asked.

"A hundred and fifty in the past thirty days," the chief replied.

Farley whistled. "One thing is certain," he said, laughingly, "they aren't passing between Rosario and the Salton sea."

"That is precisely what they are doing," returned the chief.

"Ridiculous! Excuse me, chief, but a hundred and fifty men could not cross that line without leaving some marks, and if they had made as much as a scratch I would have seen it. They must have come through on this side, where they could hide their tracks in the traffic, or else have gone up in launches; or perhaps they are still in San Diego."

While the chief proved himself right, demonstrated to his subordinate's satisfaction that it was through the Rosario country that the Asiatics had passed, let's take a general survey of the situation, so as to understand a little of what the conflict means. The golf course at Shanghai will serve as a starting point. It's a lovely course, frequented by charming people, but it's neither the sportiness of the links nor the condition of the fairway which interests us now, but the caddy fees. In this country we don't pay less than seventy-five cents for a single round, while there the charge is two dollars a month.

THE INTERLOPERS

Lower in the scale the difference in wages becomes more marked, the great Asiatic empire is overflowing with men who do hard work through long hours for a ridiculously small number of pennies. When one remembers the tariff of the Chinese laundryman, vegetable peddler or domestic, one is not surprised at the desire of the submerged Oriental to escape to the western hemisphere. He would come in hordes, he would crowd the capacious steerage of the liners that run to San Francisco and Puget Sound, but for the barriers that the United States throws across his path.

Exclusion is almost an accomplished fact and the number of Chinese on the Pacific coast is constantly dwindling. Yet there are adventurous souls who still migrate to the land of freedom, who run the gamut of all the ingenuity of our federal inspectors, and who remain with us long enough to amass a substantial competence. Their path is strewn with the wrecked hopes of those who fail, but having so much to gain, so little to lose, there is a constant stream seeking ingress.

Their point of attack is usually northern Mexico. Some go there with the deliberate intention of crossing into the United States. Large numbers have been brought to Guaymas and other Mexican cities to be contract laborers, and have been drawn towards the boundary as by a loadstone. Anywhere from the Point of Rocks to the Colorado River they endeavor to slip across the line, hoping to sink themselves in the Chinatowns of one of the larger

ARREST OF CLEM HARDING

cities. Once safe, the fugitive is apt to buy a second-hand "check-gee," an official permit to remain in this country. The vendor is perhaps ready to return to the celestial empire, so he takes two profits, one from his successor whose purchase is technically worthless, the other from our government, which, finding the simple minded coolie without papers, ships him home at its own expense. The newcomer is reasonably safe, both because he is well versed in guile and because identification is almost impossible.

A hundred and seventy-five miles of wild border and the coast line within the sailing radius of a launch, have to be guarded. It speaks volumes for the efficiency of our immigration bureau that with it lie the honors of war. Money, after all, is the criterion of success. The fact that the average price of one hundred and fifty dollars a head is paid for smuggling these undesirable aliens shows how conscientious is the vigil on cliff and beach, in the river bed of Tia Juana and on the hills of Campo, in the wilds of Jacumba, and on the desert of Cal-exico. More than cool daring has to be discounted; Chinese have been found under loads of hay, or the false bottoms of boats, they have been artistically disguised as Japanese, or hidden in the brush as carefully as a miser hides his gold. Every conceivable part of an automobile has been made to disgorge this contraband. In a land where imagination is as untrammelled as the air the poetry of concep-

THE INTERLOPERS

tion has outdone itself on this modern underground railroad.

The case under discussion was the most serious leak that had yet occurred. Spies in Tijuana and reports from San Bernardino left no room for doubt, either as to numbers or as to route. Farley reluctantly conceded that the process of elimination left him the onus.

A few days later he was out over the mountains again, responding to a report that there had just been a marked decrease in the number of Chinese in Tecate. The chief had urged extra vigilance, for the rumor has gone abroad that this was to be the last run, that the gang was about to divide its profits and disband.

"Their getting past me is not so bad," mused the rider, as his horse picked its way among the barren rocks, "for it's a long way from Eden Valley to Palm Springs. I can't hope to see them, for they always travel in the dark and build no camp fires. The man who guides them is no fool, that is certain; I am beginning to believe that he is a little wiser than any of us. Think of taking a hundred and fifty men across this desert and leaving no sign, at least none that I've been able to detect.

"They used to call me a pretty good trailer in the upper Missouri. I heard the chief tell Gibson that I was brought down here because I was the best tracker and the best gun man in the northwest. That is drawing it pretty strong, for my old home is where they have the keenest men in the world.

ARREST OF CLEM HARDING

Anyway, I've been at the business all my life, in the best of schools, and I must be above the average or I wouldn't be here. Along comes this stranger and slips Chinamen under my nose, takes hundreds of them by without leaving as much as a broken twig that I've found. It's no great compliment to the state of Montana. Hello, here are some more cattle tracks; perhaps he puts those coolies inside the cows.

"About ten days old," mused Farley, after making a careful study. "Twenty-two head, I think, of long-horn steers. One Mexican herding them, driving them hard. Sorrel pony, with a ringbone on his left hind ankle. I wonder why he is taking them south?" Farley followed the trail for several hours. He didn't learn anything further until he came to a place where the hoof prints turned into the brush, leaving the path they'd been following so carefully. In another hundred yards the herder had his charges under control, but the officer swung off his horse, and on hands and knees examined that part of the cattle trail which had not been so recently travelled.

"Nearly six weeks old. It never rains in these mountains, they say, but it does blow. There were some cattle going north not less than a month ago, might be two or three. Same pony herding, that much is clear. I wish someone would tell me the answer."

Farley rode east all the rest of that day, making camp at a water hole of which he knew. He had not travelled far the next morning before he came to some fresh tracks. A hasty survey told him that

THE INTERLOPERS

it was the same herd and the same horse that he had followed the day before; this time, however, they were northbound, and the sign was but two days old. Again Farley made a thorough examination, but discovered nothing beyond convincing proof that his surmise was correct. He galloped after the mysterious band as fast as he dared hurry his horse in the intense heat of the desert edge. "I wish I could travel at night as they do," he said to himself. "They're not many miles away; I may overtake them before sundown and make this devil's country give up one of its secrets."

He soon came to a spring where the herd had rested through the day, and there Farley spent all of a precious half hour. "There's something about this that I don't like," he said. "Those cattle are handled by a man who knows his business thoroughly, yet they mill around that water hole—" out-running his words there entered his mind the suspicion that the stock had been moved about intentionally, that the obliteration of every suggestion of a camp had been because there was something to hide. He rode harder than ever now, he became more alert and more cautious, to the extent of even loosening his rifle in its scabbard and carrying his revolver in his hand.

Not long after his noon rest he came to the top of a ridge. Before him were spread miles of country, monotonously dry and hot and sterile. There were beauty, and colors, too, among the rocks the rain almost never touched, among the hills that ran





"Drop that gun!"

ARREST OF CLEM HARDING

from the pines on his left to the desert on his right. But he was blind to nature, he who usually loved such a view. With binoculars he was searching for his quarry.

"They must be in camp along that creek bed, the water holes are there. They are surely by one of the three springs. I had best reconnoiter them with some little care."

Two hours later he was half a mile from the first of the possible camp sites. He dismounted, concealed and fastened his pony, and proceeded on foot, carefully, stealthily. But although a sentry could not have detected his masterly approach, he found no recent indications of anyone having been near that water, so he picked up the cattle trail again and went back for his horse. As he skirted a large boulder that was not far from the animal, he heard a sharp, commanding voice from behind:

"Drop that gun!"

There was nothing to do but obey. Farley turned slowly, to confront an easily held revolver, and a man whose face was masked behind a red bandana.

"Clem Harding!" he exclaimed.

The highwayman disgustedly tore off his disguise. "Who would have expected it to be you? Hey, hombre!" he shouted, and presently a Mexican appeared, much more thoroughly disguised than Clem had been.

"Find his handcuffs and slip them on his wrists," Clem spoke in Spanish, a language easily understood by the three. "Bueno, now give me his gun. Ride

THE INTERLOPERS

back to camp, bring enough for two men and two horses for three days."

The Mexican showed his surprise. "For two men?" he asked, and in spite of himself Farley began to feel queer about the stomach. Harding dismissed his messenger with an impatient wave of the hand.

"Mr. Harrison," said Clem. "You and I are going to see a good deal of each other for the next few days, so let us start in by getting acquainted. I want to see the star on your suspender strap."

"My full name is Ralph Harrison Farley, and I am an immigration inspector," the other replied pleasantly, showing his badge of authority as well as he could with his manacled hands. "While the introductions are going on would you mind telling me how you happen to be mixed up in this nasty mess?"

"I needed the money. I hate to rub it in, but it seems to me that you're in a lot nastier mess now than I."

"You either have to kill me or turn me loose," said the inspector, "and if you had intended murder you wouldn't have sent away your man Friday."

"Don't be too sure. It's your life or mine, for Hollington has often told me that I couldn't survive a year in close quarters."

Neither spoke again until the provisions had come. Farley's horse was brought to him, and the men rode to the nearest water hole. Here the Mexican left them, with detailed instructions. "I'll keep

ARREST OF CLEM HARDING

this man three days," said Clem in conclusion. "Let the cattle go, for I'll watch your back track. Travel as fast as you can, and do just as we have always done. Adios."

"Adios, Señor," and he was gone.

"So that's how you did it," said Farley, admiringly. "Drove the steers behind to cover their tracks."

"And also kept away from the skyline during daylight."

The federal officer laughed. "That was foolish," he admitted. "Just yesterday I was telling myself that I must be a pretty good woodsman, but I'll have to confess that you're my master, yes, and master of anyone else I know," he added generously.

"Thanks," said Clem, preparing the camp fire and the supper. "I've been at it a bit longer than some others."

When the meal was finished Farley again started the conversation. "I'm downright sorry to see you doing this, Harding. You always seemed a man of too high moral fibre—"

"There's nothing wrong about it," said Clem, shortly.

"Nothing wrong about it?"

"Not for me."

"What do you mean?"

"The United States says the Japanese may come in but the Chinese may not. That is because we're afraid of Japan."

"Not at all, for the Japanese are excluded, too."

THE INTERLOPERS

"Enough are here to have taken almost all the farms in Rosario. The only chance I had to save mine was to make a lot more money, and this is the best way that offered. If it's right for the Japanese to come in and take my place, it is right for the Chinese to come in and save it."

It was not until the next morning, with the sun half way to the meridian, that the talk between these two again took a personal tone. "You are a nice boy, Farley, but I'm growing to hate you. Nothing but you stands between me and my home. I could shoot you with absolute safety, for I've an alibi so perfect that I wouldn't even be suspected. I wonder if you can imagine what that home means to me? No, you're too young."

"Tell me about it," said Farley, kindly. He knew he was perfectly safe, and he was genuinely sorry for the old man. So Clem, always glad to talk, told of his day dreams, of how through youth and middle age he had never had a home, had never ceased to long for one. How the slowly accumulated savings of years of hard work had gone into the farm in Eden Valley, of how he had struggled against advancing age and a series of misfortunes, and had held on in spite of everything. It was a story of more than attachment, it was the revelation of the life passion of a childless old age, the orange grove and the house were parts of the man himself. He justified his conduct; good old gambler that he was, he didn't whimper because he had lost, but neither would he admit that he'd made an error

ARREST OF CLEM HARDING

in judgment. "I played a long shot," he said, "and I still believe it was a good bet."

When the third day broke, Clem made his plans for departure. He had Farley write a note to the chief, explaining the situation. This Clem agreed to mail; by the time the officer was rescued the fugitive would be hiding in Mexico. Then came the problem of making the inspector secure and still not too uncomfortable. It was accomplished with the aid of an extra pair of handcuffs which Clem fastened about his ankles, thus effectively hobbling him.

"Don't work too hard to free yourself, for you couldn't cross this country afoot without water, and I'm going to take your horse and your water bags. Be patient." And waving a farewell, the pioneer leading one horse and riding the other, disappeared down the draw.

Two hours later Farley heard the crunch of steel shod hoofs on gravel, and there was Clem Harding and the two ponies.

"Have you forgotten something?" asked the captive.

"I almost did." Clem swung himself to the ground, unlocked the handcuffs on the ankles, then those on the wrists, and passed both revolvers to the astonished man. "I almost forgot that I never ran from anything yet, and I'm too old to learn. If I could have saved the farm, I would have gone on, for I haven't done anything I think is wrong. But as I've lost my home anyway I'll take

THE INTERLOPERS

my medicine. With that dear old place gone freedom isn't worth the struggle and the price. I like you, Farley; you must take all the credit for this that you can get, and I'll not contradict a word."

"I'll tell the chief that you outgeneralled me at every stage of the game, and that the only reason I'm bringing you in is because your conscience made you let me. We'll fix it for you, we'll get you off free. All you'll have to do is to tell us about the others."

"Mr. Farley, did you know that we ran a hundred and eighty Chinamen across the line?"

"I suspected it."

"And that my share is thirty dollars apiece?"

"You told me so."

"I didn't offer to divide with you, and I think I'm entitled to as much consideration and respect—"

"I apologize from the bottom of my heart, Mr. Harding. Will you take my hand on it? I wish to God I had a right to set you free."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE LAST TRENCH

THERE was a subdued air of excitement about the Coulters home, for Dr. Alling was coming to spend the day. The medical convention which had brought him to the coast demanded so much of his time that a few hours between trains was all that he could spare Rosario. Sam was to meet him at the station to bring him to lunch, and after the meal they had planned to drive over the valley.

When the old spring wagon drew up and the doctor alighted, he was met with an enthusiasm that well repaid him for the long trip from Chicago. Mary Coulters and her two daughters and Billy Evans were all that were there to welcome him, but they were so genuinely glad to see him that he could hardly keep the catch out of his voice when he spoke to them. They seated him on the porch, pulled their chairs about his, and proceeded to ply him with questions.

"You're all as bad as Sam," he protested at last. "Ever since I left the cars I've been trying to talk of Rosario, but I'm allowed to speak only of myself. I know something of what has happened, and I want to know the rest. Tell me about the Warners and the Kraemers and the Scotts, about Clem Harding and Dorothy Tibbetts, and all the others."

THE INTERLOPERS

"I suppose we must," said Mary. "But it'll cost us all the gaiety of this reunion."

So they told him in detail everything that had happened while he had been away. With serious faces they answered questions until luncheon time brought a respite to their distress. It was after the meal was well started that Robert's name was introduced, for Alling had noticed their unwillingness to mention him.

"You've not spoken of Hollington at all," he said when he had exhausted every means to make someone else introduce the subject. "I was very much interested in that boy. I liked his personality and admired his ideals and his cleverness. He's been doing some research work on the plague that reflects great credit. I used to hear about him very often, for everyone was fond of him and had a good word to say. Of late, however, I seem to have been out of touch with him. What is he doing, and how is he getting along?"

Alling turned toward Sam for an answer. A hard look had come to the eyes of the Rosarian, for the once famous poker face could not be depended upon when Robert was under discussion. Alling looked around the table. Billy and Ruth had dropped their eyes to their plates and Frances was struggling unsuccessfully for enough self-control to enable her to answer. Mary Coulters met her guest's eye with a reassuring smile. She knew she must try to put him at his ease, even though her efforts were obvi-

ously forced and awkward. So she asked the first question that came into her mind.

"Tell us about the plague," she said, the suggestion coming from the safest part of his remarks. "I've often heard of it, but supposed it was under control, or at least confined to Asia."

"There was a year when it took every fourth person in Europe," he replied. "So you see it has no geographical limitations. And it still levies a fluctuating toll that will average perhaps a million lives annually, so you can hardly regard it as under control. It has a fascinating history that began when the Jews left Egypt. Sometimes it will smolder for years and then die out harmlessly, sometimes it will skip entire centuries only to break loose more virulently than ever. The fact that it has been quiet for a long time is no guarantee that it will remain so, nor is all our skill and knowledge anything like sufficient protection. The whole world is at its mercy, lulled into a sense of false security."

"I've heard that it's carried by fleas and rats," said Frances, taking her part now that she could.

"That's still a matter of conjecture. My personal opinion is that the fleas carry the disease from rat to rats, but not to mankind, for it's fairly well established that the *pulex cheopis* is too highly specialized to leave a rat to bite a human being. But I must confess that the consensus of the fraternity is against me on that point. The plague is primarily a disease of the rats, but we can take it from them, and so can squirrels and guinea pigs, and most of

THE INTERLOPERS

the rodents. Other animals are subject to artificial inoculation. Once you get enough of the bacilli in the air and in our food, you will find that they spread rapidly enough."

"Is the plague very deadly?" asked Ruth.

"It has been known to attack three persons in every four throughout extended districts, and to kill nine out of ten that contracted it."

"Is there no cure?" asked Billy.

"None that really amounts to anything."

"It sounds to me as though the discovery of one would be about the greatest possible achievement left to medicine."

"Hardly that, yet you are not so very far wrong."

When lunch was finished, Sam and Alling prepared for their drive. They were to cover as much of Eden Valley as was possible in a few hours, and the doctor promised faithfully to save time enough to see them all again before he left. No sooner were the two men fairly started than Alling again spoke of Robert.

"I don't know what is between you two," he said. "But I am going to see that boy. Leave me at his office for half an hour, and then we'll go wherever you wish."

For Robert Hollington this day marked the end. A letter lay upon his desk, a half opened note, that made impossible a longer stay in Rosario. Whether he was to leave under a cloud, discredited and disillusioned, or was to step to the heights occupied by men of world-wide fame was something that soon

THE LAST TRENCH

must be disclosed. For the letter was from Washington, from the department of the Interior, and informed him, without even the courtesy of a reason, that the government no longer required his services in connection with the Cuyamaca Indians.

He had read that communication more than once. He had pondered upon the effect that it was to have on him, he had been over and over the ground seeking some escape from the inevitable conclusion that it meant his departure. He had friends from whom he could and would borrow if he left, but he was too proud to think of doing such a thing while he remained in California. For there was work awaiting him in the east, trivial, ill-paid work, but it would enable him to repay, to buy food and clothes. But at home, even with that federal position his watch and personal effects had gone, and a bill of sale lay against the contents of his office, his books, his furniture and laboratory supplies, everything.

"I've seen many a better man go before me, and now my turn has come. We each have had to give up something. If mine seems the hardest experience of them all I must be broad enough to recognize that every one of the others has suffered his special pain. Yet I'm the only one who has left his loved one behind, the only one who will not receive as much as a word of farewell. I can't judge the others, can't tell how much they suffered, but I know that human misery can't go deeper than it has gone with me.

"Are we men less the children of circumstances

THE INTERLOPERS

than these guinea pigs of mine? You poor little devils, there are several dozen of you. Eight go into one cage for control. They're to be safe and pampered, yet through no credit to themselves. Here are two pens, each containing six, which are doomed to a certain and painful death. Some are to have the plague with pneumonia added, some simply bubonic plague. They have no choice, they have done no wrong, yet were they human humanity would strive to blame them in some way. There are the others, all with the disease in one form or another; their lives depending solely on my skill and the accuracy of my reasoning. They will fight and struggle, they will act as though in some way they could control their fate, could affect the doom that will either overtake them or pass them by.

"Somehow it all reminds me of poor Rosario. Translate Japanese into plague germs, and think of the settlements that have not been touched. The conception reminds me of dear old Clem; it is just what he would have said, so that must be why I thought of it, he is so seldom out of my mind. Poor Clem! I wonder if I can show a courage as great as yours."

As Hollington had said, there was cage upon cage of the rodents. All but one small group had been infected with the plague germs, and many of the animals were dying, slowly and horribly. A full half of the entire number had been treated with a serum worked up from the supra-renal glands of ground squirrels that had contracted the disease and

THE LAST TRENCH

recovered. The test had been exhaustive, the remedy had been administered in doses of various size and in all stages from the most critical on one hand to pure prevention on the other.

At daylight that morning Robert had begun his long vigil before the pens. Everything had been timed to come to a head during the ensuing twelve hours. Running true to form there were pens that had been inoculated but not treated, and here, without exception, were the characteristic symptoms, buboes or septicaemia as the case might be.

As the hours slipped by it became more and more apparent that the serum was effective, not only in most cases but in all cases. It had brought the progress of the disease to an immediate halt, regardless of the condition of the victim. Modern science demands more than conjecture. Nothing short of absolute proof will satisfy it; and any man who has been so roughly handled as had Robert would surely be slow to believe in his own good fortune. The evidence that was slowly unfolding could not but be accepted by both. The year of incessant study and work and experiments had borne a fruit the results of which could hardly be overestimated. Institutions would vie for his services, societies would heap honors on him, with his youth and health a great future lay before him.

He paced his room as these truths were borne in upon him. Slow to realize and believe, he had the imagination to accept the situation in all its aspects. And yet, so far from bringing him happi-

THE INTERLOPERS

ness, he was spending the most depressing and miserable hour of his existence.

"I've accomplished it," he said, "and now to what can I look forward? It's the leaving that matters, not the destination."

It was such thoughts as these that Dr. Alling burst in upon. "Robert, my boy," he said, "I'm glad to see you." The older man's whole heart was in those simple words, and in the hand grasp that accompanied them. He radiated his pleasure in the meeting to such an extent that Robert responded as though to a strong stimulant. The reaction from his depression was sudden and complete, for the poor fellow had seen no such cordiality for many a day.

The contrast between the two became apparent to both as they stood facing one another and exchanging commonplaces. When they had last been together it was Robert who had been more carefully dressed, now it was Alling. It was not exactly the lack of care of clothing or person that the young physician exhibited, but an indefinable something, incongruities of one kind or another, that bore a suggestion of the shabby genteel. The condition of the rooms in the same way betrayed the absence of prosperity, for a bit of dust here or an unnatural arrangement there showed how little these offices were used.

"I have lost my practice," said Robert, reading the Chicagoan's thoughts. "Not only in part, but absolutely. It seems incredible that while once

THE LAST TRENCH

everyone for miles around was sending for me, to-day I have not a single patient."

"I was prepared for something of the sort, but not for any such collapse as this. Tell me what has happened?"

"I really do not know; I tried to model my career on yours, and at first I succeeded beyond my expectations. Then little by little I lost my friends, I suppose because they were too uncharitable and I was too unyielding. Dr. Hill drives over from Santa Rosa to care for the whites, the Japanese have their own doctor, and today I have learned that even my Indians have been taken away."

The medical practitioner sees more of the shadows of life than men in any other walk. He learns to read human nature, he almost unconsciously studies the men whom he meets, just as Dr. Alling was doing now, prompted by force of habit, not suspicion. There was nothing about the young doctor that could account for his extremity; neither vices nor an uneasy conscience were his. So Alling, giving the most careful attention and asking the most searching questions, persuaded him to tell his story.

"I admire your courage, Robert, and your devotion to ideals, which is more than I can say of your judgment. You have had a bitter lesson, my boy, so I will not preach. You have learned for yourself that man is gregarious and that you can't plunge blindly forward without recognizing or making allowances for others. If you ran across a crowded

THE INTERLOPERS

ballroom floor while a dance was in progress, and did not stop or turn for anyone, you would not be very popular when you reached the other side. You had certain plans which you were determined to follow, but you had absolutely no elasticity."

"What would you have done if such things had happened to you? Would you have drawn the color line and said to yourself that your duty demanded only so much of you, and no more?"

"When Roosevelt was asked, 'What would you have done had you been president when the *Lusitania* was sunk?' 'Had I been president the *Lusitania* would not have been sunk,' was the reply."

"I suppose it's all my fault."

"To some extent, yes. You stayed here too long, for one thing."

"I had my work, you know."

"Oh yes, on the plague. How is it progressing?"

"I've discovered a cure, and this morning I've proved it."

"If that statement is correct, Robert, do you know what it will mean to you?"

"In a way I do. It's all so new that I haven't had time as yet to think it out."

"Do you care to tell me about it?"

"Yes, and I want you to be as sceptical as you can. I'll go over it all while you concentrate on a search for flaws."

Then it was that Robert had his hour of triumph. The elation that had not come when he was alone followed quickly in the wake of Alling's growing

THE LAST TRENCH

admiration. Step by step the details of the grueling work were unfolded, the history was revealed of whole months of experiments that had to be thrown away as useless. There was related the story of the birth of the great idea, and the reasoning that lay behind its conception. Preliminary work seemed to substantiate it, so the present exhaustive series of tests was staged.

From pen to pen the two doctors went. Every animal was separately examined, its condition carefully noted on a rough chart, and every added entry proved that Hollington had won. When the work was completed and the last blank had been filled, both studied the paper with great care.

"There is no room for question, positively none," was Alling's verdict. "Your demonstration that this serum will cure guinea pigs must be accepted by the profession. There remains, however, to show that it will be as effective in the case of human beings."

"Yes, but that is a pure formality, for it's exactly the same disease with us as it is with them. It must work in every case."

"Have you ever thought of what use you will make of this discovery?"

"Not beyond publishing it."

"You will probably be sent to San Francisco or to the Orient by the Rockefeller institute, to prove it more thoroughly and to teach and improve your technique. After that you'll have a future so much

THE INTERLOPERS

broader than mine that I feel honored in being in your confidence."

"If all this is so, I know that nothing can ever give me more pleasure than you're giving me now. You're the master whom I have tried to follow, and your approbation means more to me than the praise of strangers."

"It's all true enough, Robert. I'm going to indulge myself in a little reflected glory by loaning you some money, taking you east with me, and introducing you and your discovery. By the way," he added, "I've a newspaper with me which contains an article on the plague. I noticed the headline, but did not have time to read it. Perhaps it will interest us to see what was said."

He took a San Diego morning paper from his pocket, turned over the sheets until he found the title for which he was looking, and both men read the quarter column of text. It told of a discovery by a doctor in Baltimore of a positive cure for the plague, and outlined precisely the same theories that Robert had been expounding to Alling. It told something of the labor that had preceded the demonstration, and was profuse in its prophecies of the honors which would be heaped upon the latest arrival in the medical hall of fame.

The two turned to each other in consternation.

"I've never been thrown against a more damnable piece of ill luck. Robert, I'm more sorry for you than I can tell."

"It means that all this work has been wasted,"

THE LAST TRENCH

said the other, incredulously, still hardly able to grasp the full meaning of the situation. "I could have accomplished just as much in five minutes by reading that article. We have nothing here that is not known to the whole fraternity, and my position is the same as though the whole thing had been a flat failure."

"It is too bad," was all that could be said by the man of ready words.

CHAPTER XXVIII

IRVING STANHOPE'S SERMON.

IT was Sunday morning. Gone from the valley were the week day sounds, the creaking of wagons and the clanking of plows. No anvil filled the air with the ringing of steel on iron, the staccato vibrations of no gasoline motor came with characteristic short, sharp, irregular puffs. Peace at least there was on earth, and good will there also seemed to be as lark and finch, linnet and mocking bird, finding their first timid notes no longer drowned, burst into a riot of untrammelled song. Even the steady west wind was subdued, adding merely a gentle rustle as it stirred the grain stalks and orchard leaves.

Upon this sometime sacred repose came the call to worship. No one can say that it was only in the imagination of those who heard, that this, the last time a Christian church was to hold services in Rosario, the tones of the bell were sadder than had been their wont, that the swelling sound was more wistful and more appealing than it had been before. Certain it is that the accustomed worshipers had felt no such thrill on other Sunday mornings as they felt today when the strokes with lessened strength told of the approaching end of Christian worship in Eden Valley, the mocking echo, flung back from

IRVING STANHOPE'S SERMON

the mountains, proclaiming the final triumph of paganism.

A saddened congregation filed silently through the doors. Every white man in Eden Valley was present, yet the numbers were so few that it was with difficulty the service was conducted with the usual formalities.

It was to worship the God of their fathers in the land which had been given them for that purpose that this Rosarian remnant of Christian civilization had assembled for the last time. They were too intent on the sorrows of the situation to give much heed to the details of what was passing about them. But little by little the spell of the music and the environment of sanctity brought them out of themselves and carried them away from the things of this world. But by the time the minister commenced his discourse the congregation was ready to hear.

It was not the Reverend Irving Stanhope whom they knew so well, but a younger, stronger Stanhope, who now addressed them. True, the thin, grey locks were there, and the wrinkled face, but a new fire shone in the eyes, a new energy was manifest in the wasted frame, which though but momentary was none the less impressive.

"There has never been a time," he said, "that a Christian church so well entrenched and so long established as ours has been driven out by paganism, and left without hope of returning. For well over a hundred years one church or another that acknowledged Jesus has been supreme in Eden Val-

THE INTERLOPERS

ley, but after today there will be no organized worship here, save the worship of idols and of ancestors. I wonder if any of us realizes what this change means to our country. The fate of Rosario alone may be of little importance, but as typifying the potential fate of the United States it means much. Hanba boasts that at no time has he had over twelve thousand dollars invested in Eden Valley. The first lesson we are taught is that in no settlement not superior to Rosario in this country can the church maintain itself against the onslaught of a crafty paganism which can control twelve thousand dollars. And if with twelve thousand dollars Rosario can thus be destroyed, certain millions can capture the United States.

"Why? Our little church building and the maintenance of the minister is an example that will do as well as any other. We must take more than a bare living out of the soil. We lose money under conditions where the invader is making a profit. Give him his due, he is clever and hard working, qualities which carry far. The white brain is the stronger of the two; the white physique can endure more, but the white engine needs the larger supply of fuel. We can stand the competition of the Indian and the negro, of the Mexican and the Hindu, because though their standards of living are even lower than the Japanese, their mentality and their output is so far below his that there is no real competition. There is no need of argument, no need of proving these statements, for you yourselves are

IRVING STANHOPE'S SERMON

at once the argument and the proof. So the one point I will make while I am closing this edifice, while I am taking presumably never to return the word of the Father and the Son from this valley, is that the closing was not voluntary, but forced. The loss of one small church is of little importance, but if that loss is a test of strength between two cults and two cultures; if it prove that paganism can overrun Christianity at will, if it prove that idolatry and ancestor worship can point to any church of ours and claim it for a victim, the incident becomes pregnant with significance.

"And it has proven, at least as far as any rural community is concerned, that without different laws our civilization and our church alike are helpless. Nowhere in this country could a people be found—I make but one exception—who could have fought more nobly or more courageously than have the Rosarians. Nowhere could a people be found—again I withhold one name—who could have less to look back upon with regret, who could have left less undone to save their homes and their religion."

The impassioned voice became quiet. Over the speaker there came a change so great that some half rose in their seats as if to go to his assistance. He waved them back; for though old and weak he held himself under control.

In no one's ears had his words a more sinister meaning than in those of Frances Coulters. She looked again at Robert's accustomed seat, now vacant. She wondered if he had been advised to re-

THE INTERLOPERS

main away while he was being denounced from the pulpit. And while she waited until Stanhope should regain his strength, there came to her the knowledge that she was going to the man she loved in the moment of his degradation, that he was to take what benefit he could from the sympathy and the love that she could bring.

"I cannot preach a farewell sermon. I cannot preach at all." The fire and the life were there, but the man was old and battle-worn, and he was pleading. "It is not enough that I should tell you what your lives must be; and I can no longer show you, I can no longer ask you to follow me. My people, I have passed my seventy-eighth birthday, and yet I am but a child who craves to put his head on his mother's breast, a child made weary by his own conscience and who wants to confess and be forgiven, even though punishment intervene.

"For twenty years I have exhorted you from this same pulpit, but now, the last time I shall ever stand in it, I shall reverse the roles, I shall lay bare my soul to you that you may judge me, and condemn me if you will, for only by so doing can I hope to make my peace with mankind and with God.

"When our beloved townsman, Clem Harding, stood by the ruins of the home for which he had fought, and sinned; when the handcuffs were snapped about his wrists and he was led away to serve the sentence that means more than death to him, he was not beaten. 'I have done my damndest,' he said, 'and angels could do no more.' Oh,

IRVING STANHOPE'S SERMON

my brethren, if only I, a minister of the gospel of Christ, within the sacred precincts of this building dedicated to his worship, standing upon the platform erected to expound the teachings of him who died to save us, and speaking with all reverence, could I but apply to myself the words of that unfortunate man! Could I but say with him that I had done my best.

"Such is my confession. The commandments given to us at Mount Sinai I have kept every one. Mine is not the story of some one act atoned for; my sin covers the twenty years I have been with you, and stretches back years before that.

"I wrought with the spirit to save souls. Early in my work I was rebuffed. Everyone had vices that would not be relinquished, and my youthful zeal overwhelmed me. I had set my ambitions high. I began with what was nearest, and I worked for my end with heart and soul. Thirty-five years later I came to Rosario so badly beaten that I tried no longer to do more than my bare duty. Sometime during those thirty-five years my spirit had been broken; little by little I had found how hard and cold a world is ours, how monstrous its inertia. It was satisfied, it did not want what I had to offer, I could not force it to accept my ideals. So I allowed a feeling of delicacy and my natural sensitiveness to encrust me until at some period early in that thirty-four years I had reached a state where I was doing nothing more than what came to me;

THE INTERLOPERS

the world, its troubles and its follies, were passing to one side.

"Such I say is my confession; for fifty years I admit my life to have been a failure; that instead of fighting I have done nothing but drift. The half of a century, or ever since the civil war I have had no part in the changes that have taken place; I have been an idle spectator during a period of the world's greatest progress. Had I tried and failed I would not be ashamed; for failure is often a preliminary of success. But I did not try, I made no effort to do my share for the general uplift.

"There are two men in Rosario, and only two, who hold postgraduate degrees. Both are doctors, one of divinity and one of medicine. To which of them, think you, fell the duty of searching the secluded spots for those who needed guidance, of bringing succor to those who could not stand alone? One of them went on in the even tenor of his way and made no effort, the other fell from the first position in this valley to a level so low that scarce a soul will admit his friendship; fell because regardless of consequences, he tried. Which of them, think you, is the real failure? The outcast who did not vary from what he thought was right, who shirked nothing for the sake of expediency, who compromised nothing with his conscience, or the man who speaks to you, the pillar of society, and the head of the church who had no part in this magnificent failure, who preached what others should do but who did nothing himself? It is not

IRVING STANHOPE'S SERMON

success that discloses a man's character; it is not as you see him in his hours of ease that you can correctly judge him. My friends, you have been put to the test as have few communities in our country; and of you all, of those present and of those who one by one have dropped from among us, I alone have failed to give a proper account of myself. That I could have done nothing had I tried is no excuse. Neither the convict nor the fallen idol accomplished anything, neither the charity of our women nor such self-sacrifice as that of Sam Coulters was of material profit, for our loss is complete. But think of how souls have been strengthened and proved, while I—

“People, when adversity comes to a commonwealth like ours some meet their fate one way, some another, some succumb to weakness, or are overtaken by folly, or are ruined by credulity. Some disclose strength, some go to their doom fighting nobly; others only after exhausting all their strength in a struggle for the better life. Honor those virtues, for they have been tried under fire, and have sustained searching tests.

“Be charitable to faults; remember the law of averages, that in any given number there must develop just so many who will do wrong. Think you it is possible, when all are exposed, that not even one young woman will be injudicious? Think you it is possible when all are tempted that not even one man will try to save himself by crime? We,

THE INTERLOPERS

survivors for the moment, have seen our number decline. Do not forget that we once represented human nature in the aggregate, that about so many of us were bound to succumb in one way, about so many in another. Try to realize that those acts upon which we look back with regret were inevitable, admit that among so large a number every experience we have had was certain to occur, then say that the particular individual destined to fill any given role was not a matter of accident.

“When I bespeak charity, I plead for myself. If my reasoning is correct, there had to be one to stand aside and do nothing. I seek no exoneration, I do not offer this in extenuation, there is less excuse for me than for any who have failed, the least excuse and the greatest blame. I hope that in time your bitterness may turn to charity, more I cannot expect.

“Such has been my short-coming. With this confession behind me I feel better and freer, but my usefulness as your leader has come to an end. There is but one further act I am fitted to perform; there is the refuge of saint and sinner alike. Will you follow me in the Lord’s prayer, and bring to an end divine worship in Rosario?”

The prayer was said; the minister sank back in his seat exhausted. The farewell hymn was sung and the congregation dispersed. The first to reach the minister was Frances, bringing him sympathy and cheer. Her father was but a step behind, while

IRVING STANHOPE'S SERMON

her mother persuaded the poor old man to come to their Sunday dinner. There was not a soul who had listened to Stanhope but who managed, in spite of diffidence and awkwardness, to convey to him the assurance that he had in no wise fallen in the general estimation.

CHAPTER XXIX

LOVE'S CLEARING HOUSE

FRANCES slept fitfully that night. And when she awoke her mind was still in confusion.

She would have gone to him if he had been denounced from the pulpit, even to this victim of the needle; for in that moment when she had thought he was to be cast out of human society she had been betrayed into admitting to herself that she loved him. Loved him in spite of everything, loved him with a passion that asked nothing for herself, and cared nothing for what he had done, loved him with an unreasoning desire to stand beside him and shield him as a mother her child.

If Stanhope had made the gulf between them so broad and deep as to be impassable, she would have made it passable and have gone to him. Too honest to deny this, once she had been forced to acknowledge it, too honest to deny that it was pride which stopped her now, she fought the temptation while the dawn came stealing into Rosario. And all the while the colors deepened in the picture of herself standing beside him. She would not go to him, she could not. Maidenly pride forbade it; self-respect would not endure the thought of it. And so she went to him.

Love appears under varied aspects, as in physical desire, in propinquity, or even a consciousness with-

LOVE'S CLEARING HOUSE

out cause of existence. Love is a longing to share all, to break down every barrier, content with the knowledge that the other mind is in harmony. Love is an insatiable craving for companionship; it will tolerate no division of interest, it will endure long separations for moments of fulfillment. Love is the melting of two into one, the creation of a family from individual units, due perhaps to friendship, to admiration, to affection, to numberless everyday emotions. But it's not of these, not in its full blown realization, not in that transcendent development that comes, perhaps, only to a few, that came to Frances Coulters when she realized that she was no longer an entirety in herself, but had become a part of a new and concrete existence.

What need to follow the emotions awakened by one mistaken idea? The Arabian fisherman could no more have replaced the genii within the bottle than could poor Frances have controlled the desire to go to Robert which now obsessed her. She said she would not go, even as she dressed herself with unusual care. She proved to herself that she could not go, even as she left the house on an errand which may or may not have been necessary. She told herself that no harm lay in her going home past his office, for it was hardly out of the way. But she did not even pretend to have conscious control over her actions when she turned down the pathway and opened the door of his reception room.

Robert, with no delay, had flung open the door of his laboratory, but, recognizing Frances, he stopped

THE INTERLOPERS

on the threshold, spellbound. Coatless and collarless he was, his hair rumpled over his forehead, one sleeve rolled above the elbow. In his left hand he held a letter, his right still was on the doorknob, as, speechless with surprise, he looked at his caller. She did not miss the flash of triumphant happiness that came to his eyes, came and went with the speed of thought.

"How do you do?" he said. "I hope it is not you who needs my services." He thought his professional manner best calculated to put her at her ease.

"Robert, are you sure it's not you who needs mine?"

"I don't understand."

"I'm offering you a helping hand. I thought perhaps if I talked to you a little I might start you on a road that would lead you back to—to—"

"To what, Frances?" the question was asked in the kindest manner.

"Oh, I can't express it in words, but you know there has been a great change in you since you came to Rosario."

"To what particular do you refer?"

"Robert, I came here to offer you serious help, not to bandy words. How am I to—"

"Frances, we are at cross purposes once more. Please tell me what you mean."

"Very well, then, I will. I came here to persuade you to discontinue the use of morphine."

Robert came into the room, closing the door behind him. "Please be seated," he said, offering a

chair. "This is serious. I know you would not accuse me of such a thing without good reason. Why do you believe that I am addicted to the use of morphine?"

"Everyone knows it. - How? Look in your mirror, compare what you see with what you were when we first met. Study the lines in your face, your dishevelled appearance, the condition of your clothing. I never realized before how much you must have fallen in your own esteem."

"Frances, I am going to prove to you that I have had nothing to do with morphine or any other drug." There was a strength and vitality in his voice that in itself belied the accusation of degeneracy. "Look at my eyes, make a mental picture of my pupils—"

"Oh Robert, I know I was wrong, and I'm so glad."

"I'm going to tell you the truth about some things, because even that is preferable to having you believe that I've lost my self-respect. I am packing to leave, and I have to save my coat and collar. If my linen is torn and soiled it is because I'm inexperienced at sewing and washing. And if my face has developed lines they have not come from opiates, but from hunger."

"Hunger?"

"Yes, I simply haven't been getting proper food. Every cent of my money is spent. You must not go yet."

THE INTERLOPERS

"I came only because I thought you needed help to break a bad habit."

"And now that you are here," he laid a detaining hand on her arm, "there are some other things you must know. We are both going away from Rosario, to opposite corners of this continent. I have told you too much to stop now; if you and I are to separate with you fully aware of the circumstances to which I am reduced, then you shall also learn why I've been brought to this condition. I'm too good a doctor to starve; there are friends and opportunity awaiting me in New York, but not even the combined spleen of a whole community has been able to drive me from Rosario. Do you know why? Regardless of the rights of any others I'm going to tell you. It's because I love you, love you as I did that Sunday afternoon. My God, how the months have dragged since then, and every minute that was spent away from you was separate torture! It hasn't been hope that kept me here; it wasn't an occasional glimpse of you that offset poverty; there was nothing to counterbalance the suffering. I stayed on, not because I wanted to, but because I couldn't leave you, because it was impossible for me to force myself away. I'm trampling the remnants of my pride underfoot—"

"You said you were speaking regardless of the rights of others." Her quiet voice checked him. "You mustn't do that, Robert. Besides, I have to hurry home, for I've a good deal to do since Ruth left."

LOVE'S CLEARING HOUSE

"Is Ruth away?" he asked mechanically, from a sense of politeness.

"Do you mean to say that you have not heard that she was married last Wednesday, and has gone to Mexico?"

"Why no, whom did she marry?"

"Billy Evans, of course."

"Billy Evans?" he repeated incredulously. "Billy Evans?" The possibilities of the situation were coming to him. "Billy Evans!" he fairly shouted. "Why, there's no one else who has any rights."

"Except Mrs. Richardson."

"She's been gone for—"

"Yes, but—"

"Did you know that I didn't see her once during the last month she was here?"

"No,—"

"Do you care to know why?"

"Why, really—"

"I'm going to tell you that, also. It was because of something she said about you. We talked of you a great deal."

"You'd no right ever to bring in my name."

"Every right in the world. That's why I was with her so much."

Frances took time to digest this remark. Two wonderful eyes looking steadily at Robert began to radiate a glorious light, but the hurt had been too deep and of too long duration to disappear in a moment. So Robert again took up the conversation.

"Not at any time, Frances, was either of us the

THE INTERLOPERS

least interested in the other. We were both playing a game, and we both understood. I was hungry for someone to tell me about you, of how you looked and what you said, and where you went. So I was drawn to her, until one day I found that jealousy and vanity were prompting her to undermine you. There is nothing she said that I can repeat, no single word of criticism, no expression of disdain, but the time came when I saw through her. Since then I've been more lonely and more hopeless than seemed humanly possible. I knew that Billy Evans was with you all the time—oh, you cannot understand."

"You are mistaken, Robert, for I do understand perfectly." Then she abruptly turned to another topic. "Dr. Alling told us that you had just missed becoming famous."

"I wonder what he thinks of me?"

"He didn't say much, because—" she stopped, with a touch of confusion.

"Because your father wouldn't allow it," he finished for her.

"Father has never forgiven you for taking the part of the Japanese."

"I know, and probably he never will. They came between you and me, too. But only a memory separates us now. I was right, Frances, but if you judge me wrong, can't you come to me knowing that I've more than atoned for any error, and that it was one that cannot be repeated?"

He held out his arms to her. The further entreaty that he might have voiced was written on his

LOVE'S CLEARING HOUSE

face. Desire, heart hunger and loneliness, need of her, and newly awakened hope demanded no words to establish magnitude or sincerity. And ever there came to her face more of softness, her eyes half closed, her lips parted slightly with a smile of contentment. And then, neither ever knew how, they were in each other's arms.

"I do love you, Robert," she heard herself saying, "and I do not judge you. There is nothing between us now, for if there were, I could not be so happy."

So in the supreme moment they buried the complications that had come to them. Their irreconcilable attitudes on the Japanese question at one time had appeared insurmountable, but now that the foreigners could no longer be an issue the subject was scarcely remembered. Circumstances, personified by the small yellow man, had intervened to save them.

Robert was the first to come back to earth.

"I hardly have the right to speak as I've done," he said, "I'm too poor."

"Is that all?" She took her head from his breast to ask the question, then snuggled into his arms again.

"It's too serious to be turned aside."

"You will have to take up that work in New York."

"The salary is almost nominal, and there is no prospect of advancement."

"We'll talk it over some other time," she said. But seeing that he was not satisfied, and being de-

THE INTERLOPERS

terminated that there should be no disappointments on this day of days, she added, "Show me your laboratory, and tell me about the discovery that should have given you a world wide reputation."

They went into the adjoining room. The walls were covered with shelves holding bottles and chemicals, and there were the conventional bookcases and the paraphernalia of a practicing physician. But the implements of the profession were pushed to one side to make room for a large work bench. Frances noticed with a pang that no access had been saved to the glass sterilizing stand which held his instruments, and that a coat of dust had settled over it, even to the knob of its door.

On the bench were eight or ten cages and row after row of racked test tubes. The pens were empty, though they bore evidence of recent occupancy. Nearly all the glass tubes were plugged with absorbent cotton.

"This is the scene," said Robert. "I have cleaned away everything except those racks, but they are still a veritable magazine of death."

"Tell me what's in the tubes."

"Beef broth. Sometimes we add agar threads or gelatine, and we have many combinations and names, but the principal is juice from meat or some other food."

"And the cotton?"

"Air circulates freely through it, but solids no matter how minute, do not. You see, we sterilize our culture media, and keep it pure with these plugs.

LOVE'S CLEARING HOUSE

Then we can plant anything we choose. For instance, everyone of my tubes contains pure colonies of the bacillus pestis."

"It's very deadly, is it not?"

"In many respects it is the most terrible of all the disease germs. It has certainly killed a billion men."

"I wonder how it would feel to hold so much death in one's hand. May I pick up a tube?"

He nodded assent, and she lifted one of the glass cylinders with her left hand, the right being otherwise engaged.

"It frightens me, yet it fascinates," she said, carefully holding it to the light. "It looks harmless—"

How it slipped from her fingers can never be known. The upper part was broken when the light tube crashed to the bench, but the lower part, protected by its contents, remained intact. It was rolling so rapidly towards the edge of the table that even though she snatched at it without the slightest hesitation, she was barely able to save it from going to the floor.

Frances tendered the fragment to the doctor, who at once plugged it with cotton. He reached for a bottle of alcohol and carefully washed her hands and his own, and poured a cupful or more on the bench.

"There are no cuts or sores on your hands?" he asked. "Not even hangnails?"

She told him there were not, though even as she answered she noticed a tiny particle of glass impaled on her wrist. This she kept carefully concealed by

THE INTERLOPERS

her sleeve, partly because she did not like to mention it after having said there was nothing, partly because she did not choose to worry him. It was all too trivial to deserve a thought on such a day as this. She had no conception of the risk she was taking, and she had been too excited and frightened to give much heed to what she was saying.

But the little accident had startled the pair sufficiently to bring back the actualities of life. Frances had been entrusted by her mother with a parcel for Irving Stanhope, so Robert walked with her to the rectory. Then he left her, after arranging to come over in the evening.

In the middle of the afternoon the Coulters' Mexican farm hand brought him a note:

"Dearest Robert," he read, "I told Father and Mother something of what happened this morning, and I'm afraid things are not to be as we wish. I love you, Robert, I always will, and I know that such a love as ours cannot lead to permanent separation. But as long as I am under my father's roof I must respect his feelings, when they are as strong as they are on this subject.

"You and I are to have no communication beyond this note, which I have promised to make as formal as possible.

"Robert, dear, I know that our morning was not intended to be fruitless, I know that in some way this complication will adjust itself. For I believe in you, Robert dear, and I am sure that you will come for me. When you do, whether the time be

LOVE'S CLEARING HOUSE

short or long, you will find me waiting, Robert, waiting for you.

“Dear heart, will it help you any to be told that the reading of this note cannot bring more unhappiness than writing it has done?

“Always yours,

F. C.”

CHAPTER XXX

HANBA COERCES SAM COULTERS

SAM COULTERS was at home as he had promised to be. He was seated on his porch, making at least a pretense of reading the morning paper, when interrupted by the sound of someone in the garden.

"How do you do, Mr. Coulters," said Hanba, raising his silk hat and making a most elaborate bow before mounting the steps.

Sam allowed the hand that held his paper to fall by the side of his arm chair. He very deliberately uncrossed his knees, very slowly turned his body until he was directly facing his caller, then fastened upon him a steady, inquisitive stare. The cold-blooded rudeness of this reception fairly swept Hanba off his feet. He had expected his condescension in being the one to make the call to be recognized, he had expected to have a seat offered him, and refreshments urged. He had even gone so far, while walking towards the Coulters place, as to run over in his mind some of the phrases to be used in the preliminary exchange of compliments, translating them tentatively into English, so that they would be the more available. And here he was like a truant schoolboy before his master, ill at ease and utterly at a loss for words, forced almost to apologize for his presence.

HANBA COERCES SAM COULTERS

"Those others, they come to me or go to Mr. McGowan," he found himself saying, "but you are a big man, Mr. Coulters, and I have come to you." Hanba smiled happily; surely now everything would be all right.

"So I see." Sam's tone was hardly more gracious than his words. Ever that cold, superior stare, that half tolerant, half supercilious awaiting of an explanation. Irritated, Hanba dropped the role of diplomat for that of master. Why endure such treatment, under the circumstances? His whole demeanor changed, and his features hardened as he turned squarely toward the American that he might return rudeness for rudeness.

Hanba's eye met the other's bravely enough, but almost coincidentally with the shock of the conflict it wavered and fell. Let us not blame or belittle the Japanese. He was a foreigner, handicapped by unfamiliarity with language and custom, and he was facing Sam Coulters.

Thoroughly displeased, Hanba again found himself forced to speak, so he tried to say what he had originally planned, although the interview was not proceeding at all as he had intended.

"Mr. Coulters, you're a big man and I'm a big man." Hanba did not miss the fleeting shadow, the momentary catch of the breath. So far from being flattered, the farmer was surprised into showing just a color of the disgust and resentment that came with the coupling of their names on any basis of equality. Hanba concluded that any further attempt

THE INTERLOPERS

at finesse would be a waste, so he bluntly stated his proposition:

"Rosario is not large enough for two big men; I want you to go."

Between them there now took place a mental struggle in which one mind was yielding to the other as absolutely as though the two were in physical contact. Coulters was unconscious of this, for he had domineered his way through life and had always been accustomed to the acceptance of his ideas. Hanba, on the contrary, was acutely aware that he was encountering a will stronger than his own, a fact which had taken him greatly by surprise, for he, too, unless in the presence of an official superior, had habitually seen his opinions override all others.

The Japanese was afraid; he was honest enough to admit as much to himself. So far from having the upper hand, he was learning, as had many a man before him, that not only was it impossible to frighten the hardy old pioneer, but the mere making of threats to him entailed insurmountable obstacles. The strength and fearlessness of Hanba were conspicuous among a race famous for these qualities, and yet there could be no doubt that his reluctance to force the issue and to make his demands, sprang from fear. It was not physical, for the smaller man knew he would not be attacked, and it was not moral, for according to his teachings and his convictions his position was defensible. He was not a coward, so, having a definite task to perform, he resolutely set

HANBA COERCES SAM COULTERS

about it, in spite of being possessed of fears where he had expected to ride at ease.

"We Japanese are in a majority in the valley, Mr. Coulters. So when there is another meeting of the Rosario Mutual water company we will elect at least four directors. Mr. McGowan has told me how to do that."

Still not a word from Sam, only that steady expectant look which Hanba could not endure.

"They elect you one director," continued the latter. "Me, I am the other four."

After a moment or two he went on, there seemed to be nothing else to do. "Saishoto and three others. They do what Saishoto tells them, and he does as I direct. You see, I read your American magazine; I become captain of finance."

"I suppose you think you can manipulate the stock. What are you going to do, nickel plate the pipe?" Sam was very angry, and his choler was further fed by the returning complacency of the other.

"No assessments, Mr. Coulters, for we, too, would have to pay. Can you not see that unless you leave the water company there will always be discord?"

"I think I shall continue to serve as long as I am elected," said Sam, quietly.

"But if we lease your farm you will not remain in Rosario."

"You can't lease it. I must stay here to help my friends."

"I know, but we'll lease their places, too."

THE INTERLOPERS

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Hanba, and interfere with your plans for a final clean-up, but none of us will rent to you." Coulters' elaborate sarcasm passed unheeded. "Your countrymen have earned a reputation for squeezing a farm for its last dollar and at the same time allowing it to go to ruin."

"You see, we can't buy anything more, Mr. Coulters. Our money is all spent."

For the first time, Sam's features relaxed, and a smile broke out upon his face.

"So we will lease all the farms left in Eden Valley," the Japanese continued. "Perhaps some time we buy. We'll lease with an option."

"No one would give you such an option," Sam replied.

"And we will pay one-sixth of the crop—"

"What are you trying to get at, Hanba? You know as well as I that that is not half enough."

"And we will—"

"Your plans will not work, Hanba. You know you cannot lease for more than three years, and in that time—"

"We will lease for twenty-one years."

Sam smiled indulgently. "Ask your friend McGowan about the law."

"I did so, and he told me we could have seven different tenants and consecutive leases, each of three years. One commences when another expires."

The blow went home. If McGowan had said so, it probably was true, and if that were so the anti-

HANBA COERCES SAM COULTERS

alien land law, California's only protection, might as well be repealed. Sam was silent for the moment, readjusting himself to the altered situation, and fighting the disappointment. How he had worked for that law, and how he had counted on its forever putting an end to such aggression. There came from the housetop the notes of a mocking bird, imitating the whistle of some young turkeys. Sam remembered how originally the incident had not only amused him but had also upset the mother of the brood. He could see her yet, flustered and uneasy, trying to collect her offspring, and never quite sure whether or not one of them was missing. A homely little incident, but this was home, and it was endangered.

The way the Rosarian turned in his chair was enough to shatter Hanba's complacency, was enough to undermine the elation that had come to him when he felt that the hardest part of the struggle lay behind and that he had become master of the situation.

"I will not retire from the board nor will I lease my farm. Is there anything else you wanted to say to me?" Sam's attitude was a virtual dismissal.

It required all the courage the other could muster to answer.

"You've forgotten, Mr. Coulters, that even if there be discord, the directors of the water company will still obey me."

"What can they do?" asked Sam uncompromisingly.

THE INTERLOPERS

"There is the distribution of the water, for instance—"

"Wait for me a minute; I want my copy of our by-laws." Coulters stepped into the house. He called for Frances, and as she came from another room he viciously snapped at her, "Where are the books of the water company?"

She looked at her father amazedly, so palpably hurt that he hardly had the heart to continue.

"Here they all are," she said, handing some volumes to him. He picked out one, and as he did so, contrived to speak to her in a low tone.

"I want you and your mother to slip off your shoes, and overhear the rest of this conversation. That caller of mine may spend a good part of the next few years in jail."

As Sam came back to the porch he was turning over the pages. "You were speaking of the distribution of the water," he said. "Let me read you a few rules from this book, and you will see that the water must be divided fairly and equally and there must be no discrimination."

"Mr. McGowan tells me that no matter what that book says, that we Japanese can use almost all the water. We can let our share run until nearly the end of the month, then allow you others to draw yours."

"You mean that we have to stand all the leakage?"

"Mr. McGowan says that we could give you your water the first few days of one month, and the last

HANBA COERCES SAM COULTERS

few days of another. What would be the effect on your trees of their going unirrigated nearly sixty days?"

"Is that what you propose to do unless we lease?"

"That is one of the things Mr. McGowan tells us we might do."

"When we controlled the water we were careful to give you exact justice. Do you feel under no obligation to reciprocate?"

"Mr. McGowan says—"

"Yes, I know, but between man and man, Hanba, there are some things which are not done. I'm not asking for myself, but those people down the valley put their savings into these places and made them their homes. Can't you understand that such a thing as jockeying their water supply is simply not to be considered?"

"Mr. McGowan—"

"Are you going to go as far as he says the law permits? Are you a human being or a machine? Have you or the people for whom you work no other consideration, no higher ideals, than just the one of money returns?"

"Hanba, you must have some soul, or you could not belong to a race which will make such sacrifices as yours. You have your ideals, we have ours. The directors of that water company are put on their honor to handle it fairly, you are succeeding to the trust. You can see that what you propose is virtual stealing. Have you no conscience? No sense of right and wrong?"

THE INTERLOPERS

"A man might pay out a few dollars that way, Mr. Coulters, but this is a case involving a good many thousand. I can do far more with that much money than spend it to satisfy some ideals which are yours, not mine. Mr. McGowan told me to be very careful to make no threats, not even to tell you what we were going to do, for you might have me arrested if I did. He told me to give you these leases, he said that once you understood the matter thoroughly, you and the others, that all of you would sign."

Hanba brought a handful of papers from an inside coat pocket. Sam looked them over carefully; like all McGowan's work they were accurate and precise. There were spaces for a great many signatures, Sam noticed, and he knew that all the other names would follow as a matter of form once his own was subscribed. He looked again at that smirking face standing beside him, he saw the blunt end of a fountain pen extended to him, and once again he was seized with red hot passion, with the lust of fight. His fingers itched to grasp that little yellow neck, to go down with it into a death grapple, to end forever the enmity and the menace.

But there were other considerations and other people. There was no alternative but to add to the long list that had preceded one more sacrifice, and the noblest of them all. Satisfied that Hanba would and could carry out his threats, having exhausted every resource and finding himself thwarted at every turn, Sam took the pen and went over the leases

HANBA COERCES SAM COULTERS

word by word. While he was making such changes as he wished, his fertile brain was seeking some avenue of escape, but when he had consumed as much time as he decently could, he affixed his signature and walked into the house for Mary's. Forcing himself to violate every fibre of his nature he handed the executed agreements to Hanba, and watched the Japanese depart with pockets bulging from the fruits of victory.

Sam dropped into his chair again, tired from the strain and feeling his years as he had never done before. On the western horizon some clouds were banked to catch the setting sun. Unseeing and unthinking, he watched the great orange globe slip into its couch. He knew Mary was on the side of his chair, knew that her arm was about his shoulder and her cheek against his head, knew that she too was watching the coming of the night.

The ball of fire dropped behind the dark curtain, yet flung a semi-circle of long, straight beams as a promise of its return. Along the edge where the clouds were not so dense as to be opaque, there came a fringe of celestial light, brilliant beyond anything mundane. As the heavens grew darker and developed areas of deep, blood red, the contrast became stronger, and there came to the couple on the porch a barely recognized yearning to exchange their dismal surroundings for the glories beyond their grasp.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE

SAM COULTERS was pacing up and down his garden. One more trouble had come to him, for Frances lay in her bed stricken as with typhoid fever. Even now Dr. Hill was making his daily visit, while the anxious father waited to hear the latest report.

Sam had seen enough of the ups and downs of life to have proved his character to himself as well as to others. He was fully aware that he had a big fighting heart, and an unusual courage, both physical and moral. But he also knew his limitations, knew that he could do justice to himself only when standing on his feet and fighting. In the long series of misfortunes which had recently overwhelmed him, he had usually found his hands tied when he tried to strike. He had been compelled to yield peacefully, but he had not done so with resignation, for the passion of battle which had found no outlet burned all the more fiercely within. Pent up anger was making him desperate and he struggled against it fiercely and unreasonably like a wild animal caught in a trap.

When Hollington opened the gate and swung down the path Coulters turned to him with savage joy. Here at last was someone on whom he could vent his feelings without danger of injury to others.



"When barely two yards separated them, Robert's hand shot out of his coat pocket."

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE

The doctor was slightly disconcerted, for he had not expected to meet anyone before reaching the house, so Sam was the first to speak.

"You're not wanted here, young man."

"I came to see Frances, because—"

"I've no interest in why you came."

"Listen, Sam—"

"I've told you to leave; this is my private property."

"Will you hear what I have to tell you?"

"I will not. You are ordered off my place."

"It's about Frances."

"I will choke you before I let you mention her name to me. You pose as a man who would have sacrificed a whole community before he would have done anything not absolutely right; and now you trespass on my farm, violating good taste and the law as well."

"It's not typhoid that she has—"

"I have tried everything else," said Sam, picking up a convenient mattock handle. The remnants of his temper were gone, completely and absolutely. He advanced slowly on Robert, giving him every opportunity to leave peacefully, but there was no doubt of the menacing attitude, nor of what would happen should the younger man remain.

When barely two yards separated them, Robert's hand shot out of his coat pocket, and Sam found himself looking into the muzzle of a very business-like revolver. His anger and his frame of mind were such that even a threat to shoot would not have

THE INTERLOPERS

stopped him. But an old ingrained habit did, a respect for firearms engendered in the frontier days brought an instant of hesitation which Robert was quick to seize.

"I couldn't kill you, Sam, you know that. But if you come a step closer I'll put a bullet through your leg. I have come here to do certain things. I shall carry out my purpose in any event, and it rests entirely with you whether or not you lie here with a useless leg while I'm doing it."

Sam, leaned on his hickory club and studied his opponent. It was the crafty Sam of old, cool and collected once again, now that the issue was fairly defined. He looked calmly at the thirty-eight, he noticed that its chambers were loaded, that the hand which held it was too steady to pull the trigger prematurely. He saw Robert lower the weapon, and knew by that act alone that the young man was in earnest, for if the play had been staged in a spirit of bravado the gun would have been kept in evidence as much as possible. The older man looked into the other's face, and read there that this much of the affair was a disagreeable incident, read there the truth of the spoken words.

Then the front door was opened by Dr. Hill. Robert increased the distance between himself and Coulters by backing down the pathway. Then he suddenly turned and covered the other doctor with his revolver. That fat and pompous little gentleman crumpled with terror.

"Pick up your bag and stand beside Mr. Coul-

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE

ters," Robert ordered, and when he had been obeyed he continued, "Are you treating Miss Coulters for typhoid fever?"

For one moment a lifelong devotion to medical ethics made Hill forget his fear: "Sir, I cannot discuss my patient," he said.

"You can and you will. Answer me."

The other wilted. "What do you want to know?"

"Are you treating her for typhoid?"

"Yes."

"Are you satisfied with your diagnosis?"

"Certainly."

"What have the temperatures been?"

"From a hundred and four to a hundred and five."

"When were you called?"

"Yesterday."

"Splitting headache?"

"Yes."

"Delirium?"

"Yes."

"Eyes inflamed?"

"Yes."

"Tongue dry?"

"Yes."

"Are her lungs affected?"

"No."

"Any blood in her sputum?"

"No."

"Or septicemia?"

"No."

THE INTERLOPERS

"Have you noticed any swelling in the glands?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In the neck and under her shoulders."

"What size?"

"As large as my thumb, or larger."

"Bluish black in color, with a dash of dull red?"

"Yes."

"She has the bubonic plague, Sam, and she will be dead in forty-eight hours unless something is done."

Coulters had been listening to the conversation with an absorbed interest. He was still resting on the handle of his mattock, poised, tense, and motionless, his mind alert while he patiently awaited the outcome of the discussion. Now he turned to Hill, and abruptly demanded if Hollington's statements were true.

"Certainly not," said the doctor. "She has typhoid and nothing else. It is a tricky disease, and often runs to peculiar complications. Besides, how on earth could she have contracted the plague?"

"By breaking a test tube of bacilli pestis in my laboratory. She must have had a scratch or a sore that I failed to see."

"I am thoroughly tired of this conversation," said Dr. Hill, whose courage was returning. He had fully decided that Robert was bluffing, for he was deceived by the calm and quiet manner which told Sam that the boy was more dangerous and more in earnest than ever.

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE

"You have not heard the last from your high-handed methods," continued the little man. "You shall be severely disciplined for this, sir, very severely disciplined. I'm going back to the house—"

"You're going out of the front gate," said Robert, "and you're not coming back. From now on I will have charge of this case."

Hill's face turned a pasty white when he realized how grievous had been his error. He picked up his medicine case, which had fallen to the ground, and disappeared incontinently among the shrubbery. Sam watched him with an air of disgust, then turned to Mary, who was coming from the porch.

"I'll have this highbinder arrested," he said to her, "and bring Hill back the first thing in the morning."

"But Robert is right, Sam," she said. "I've overheard every word, and I know. Frances showed me where she had taken a splinter of glass from her forearm."

"Look at him," Sam answered impersonally, "it's all the raving dreams of a drug fiend. You know what a fetish he has always made of never doing anything that violated his ironclad code of ethics. You know that neither for himself nor for us nor for Rosario would he ever compromise at all. You know he was always careful of his appearance, respected all the conventions of society, and fairly worshipped those of his profession. Do you believe that he would have drawn a gun on me, would have threatened Hill as he did, if he had been himself?"

THE INTERLOPERS

Mary looked into Robert's eyes. He was restive, for he didn't know how to counter Sam's passive resistance, and so didn't meet her scrutiny as well as he could have wished. But she was searching his soul, in utter disregard of his appearance or his actions. It was of her daughter that she was thinking, and knowing more of what had passed between the young people than did the father, she realized that there were other things than drugs that would account for the change. Furthermore, Frances had convinced her that the stories about Robert, especially those referring to morphine, were without foundation. It was true that there was an abundance of evidence to substantiate Coulters' opinions, the haggard and desperate face, the stubby growth of beard, the rumpled hair and hatless head, the soiled and wrinkled clothing.

Yes, Robert had fallen, but when she caught the gentleness that joined determination in those clear grey eyes, when she read in his half parted lips the longing to have her become the only mother he had ever known, the rough exterior faded; she saw only the soul within. When his revolver was slipped back to his pocket, showing her that even in this extremity there could be no violence in her presence, she knew that however greatly mistaken he might be, his motives and his sincerity were not open to doubt. When he tacitly admitted that hers was the final arbitrament, she could only compare his knowledge and efficiency with the self-sufficient egoism of Dr. Hill, the special skill of one man

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE

with a diagnosis which she fully believed to be faulty. What was best for Frances was the only consideration; to questions of friendship or enmity or medical ethics she was alike indifferent. She freely accepted her responsibility to decide, and acted so quickly as to astonish both men.

"Come with me, Robert," she said, "I'll take you to Frances' room."

But Sam, though ready to sacrifice anything to his daughter's welfare, was yet so far under the influence of passion and prejudice that he believed Dr. Hill was right; believed in all sincerity that what Mary proposed would subject Frances to great danger. So his anger flared up once more, and again he became the primitive male whose strongest instinct was to protect his household.

"Mary, this man is crazy and he shall not go near her. He is our enemy, he is unworthy and unfit, and we will not be accessories to his crime."

"But Frances will die, Sam."

"So he says, but I believe the sane doctor. Mary, do not be insistent, for I've decided, as in a case of this kind is my right."

"Your right! Yours! Is there no other who has rights? Who bore that child? Who nursed her in her tender years and brought her up to womanhood? Sam, are you going to carry your personal dislike so far—"

"I must follow the dictates of my judgment, Mary."

"You come with me, Robert," she said, her voice

THE INTERLOPERS

cold as ice. "If you have to, you may use your revolver."

"All right, then, shoot," said Sam. "I'll call your bluff if it is one. If it's not—well, I've a duty to discharge regardless of consequences."

"It is not a bluff. And it is unnecessary for you to be injured in order to have revenge. Dr. Hill will have me expelled from the medical fraternity, state and national. I will probably never be able to practice again. If that's not enough, I give you my word that I will take my own life at once in case Frances dies, if in return for that promise you consent to my going to her. It may be hard for you to realize that she means more to me than she does either to you or to her mother. If she had typhoid she is now in no particular danger, but if she has the Black Death she is certain to die unless my serum will save her. You have read enough to know that. Do you understand why I am going to her, regardless of consequences? Do you not think that you had best accept my offer?"

"I do. But I'll make you keep it, my fine fellow."

"I'll not be giving much," said Robert, with a sigh; "I'll pay it gladly."

In the darkened sick room was Frances, in a condition bordering between sleep and unconsciousness. Robert pushed up the sleeves of her loose night dress, and exposed the horrible buboes in her armpits. He opened the gown in front, to disclose a chest dotted with purple spots, and he made a cur-

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE

sory examination of her face, especially her eyes and mouth.

"It's the plague," he said briefly, drawing from his pocket a carefully prepared package. Rubbing her arm with a piece of gauze saturated in alcohol, he inserted his hypodermic needle.

Four days later, he was again speaking to Mary in the sick room. "I'm getting so faint that I'm apt to drop at any moment. If I do, watch Frances. At the slightest change, wake me. Use this hypodermic if I don't respond to ordinary means. I have already taken far more stimulant than is safe. Watch her, and at the slightest change—" and for the first time in over a hundred hours he closed his eyes.

Mary looked at him and smiled. "I always did like that boy," she said to herself. "Whatever Rosario may have done to us, it certainly has made a man of him."

Minute after minute passed. Sam tiptoed beside her and held her hand—how long neither of them knew. And they waited and watched for the change. Time and again they thought it was coming. Twice Sam even rose to wake the sleeper. Then it did come, quickly and unmistakably—and Robert, supporting himself with both hands on the foot of the bed, was staring at the hectic face.

He staggered across the room and dropped upon the couch. He was crying, not with the suppressed weeping of a man, but with utter abandonment. Mary crossed the room and slipped his revolver

THE INTERLOPERS

from his coat pocket. Handing it to her husband, she put her hand gently on Robert's shoulder.

"Is there—no—hope?"

"Hope? Why, mother, the girl is well"—and he fainted dead away.

Doctors Barton and Reed were asking for Robert. Dr. Barton, his card showed, was head of the state board of medical examiners. Dr. Reed, it appeared, was chairman of the board of trustees of the California hospital. They looked at Robert, when Mary told them that he had fainted twelve hours before. Dr. Barton assured her that all was well, and that the sleeper would wake before long. Mary asked them to see Frances. They pronounced her free from fever, and on the road to rapid recovery. Then Dr. Barton's eyes fell on the chart, after which everything else was forgotten by both men.

Two hours later Robert awoke. He went in to see Frances, and then was introduced to his callers.

"I see you're from the state board," he said. "I had almost forgotten Dr. Hill. You can do no less than your duty, and I know what that means."

"If you will excuse my saying so, Dr. Hollington, we would hardly be here in person to settle a dispute between two country doctors, though it's true that we first learned of this case through Dr. Hill. We represent the California Hospital, and came because we heard that you were administering your serum to a plague suspect for the first time in history.

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE

Your patient and your chart prove that yours is a triumphant success, that the Black Death is now under control. But we're convinced that technique is half the battle; we offer you a position on our hospital staff at your own salary."

And Sam was the first to congratulate him.



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